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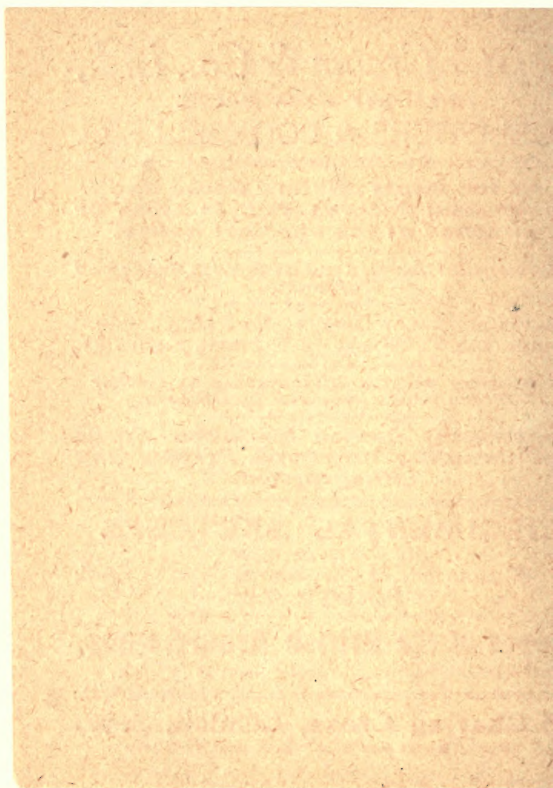
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# CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE

By  
COLONEL W. W. NORMAN

*22nd Cavalry (Indian Army).*

London :

HUGH REES, LTD, 119, PALL MALL, S.W.

1911

FORSTER GROOM & Co. Ltd., 15, Charing Cross, S.W.

# RECONNAISSANCE CAVALRY

## PREFACE

This work has been written with a view to assisting young cavalry officers to study the art of reconnaissance, and to instruct their men. A number of historical examples have been given in the introduction with the double object of bringing out the importance of information in war, and of providing a series of incidents from actual war which may be of use to make troop and squadron tactics more interesting. For the rest it has been sought to illustrate and amplify those excellent principles laid down in our regulations, and to bring forward certain details on which they are too want of space, silent, and on which there are no guides for the young officer.

In Chapter I the description has been taken to instruction in road reporting, the collection of statistics in regard to supplies, etc. These are a very minor form of reconnaissance when com-

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In Chapter III, exception has been taken to instruction in road reports, the collection of statistics in regard to supplies, etc. These are a very minor form of reconnaissance when com-



pared with the great object of obtaining intelligence of the enemy. Peace training in the former is an easy matter, and is, therefore, apt to overshadow the latter, which requires considerable thought in elaborating schemes and in assuming an enemy. To show how instruction in ascertaining the plans of an enemy may be given, a small scheme has been added as an appendix. The solution is simple and can be worked out by the reader. The system, by which information is provided by the scheme, is to give this information in the form of notes to flagmen. The latter are posted at different points and the patrol is directed to these points by suggestions and clues in the notes themselves. The patrol leader would not report each item of information so received, but judge for himself when he has collected sufficient data to warrant him sending in a despatch rider. The system may be extended and elaborated in a variety of ways, and the information given in the notes may be supposed to have been obtained from a variety of sources, such as by actual vision, extracts from newspapers, papers found in camps or in public offices, etc. Such



schemes have the advantage of giving instruction in writing messages and in their verbal delivery by despatch riders.

The information contained in the following pages has been derived from a variety of sources, but I am specially indebted to De Brack's "Cavalry Outpost Duties," Pelet-Narbonne's "Cavalry on Service," and to Furse's "Information." I have to acknowledge the kind assistance of Colonel H. T. Kenny, 37th Lancers, Indian Army, in editing this work.

W. W. NORMAN, Colonel.



# CONTENTS.

	PAGES
INTRODUCTION   ...       ...       ...	1-26
Historical examples.	
CHAPTER I.       ...       ...       ...	27-46
Strategical, tactical, and protective reconnaissance.	
CHAPTER II.     ...       ...       ...	47-74
Strategical, protective, and divisional cavalry.	
CHAPTER III.    ...       ...       ...	75-96
Order of battle, characteristics of commanders, spies, hostile plans, indications.	
CHAPTER IV.     ...       ...       ...	97-110
Topographical reconnaissance, rapid sketching.	
CHAPTER V.      ...       ...       ...	111-143
Action of patrols and other recon- noitring detachments.	
CHAPTER VI.     ...       ...       ...	144-159
Transmission of information, writing messages, despatch riders and relay posts.	
CHAPTER VII.    ...       ...       ...	160-203
Advanced, flank and rear guards, and outposts.	
APPENDIX       ...       ...       ...	204-210
Reconnaissance scheme for a patrol.	

2

# CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE

## INTRODUCTION.

### HISTORICAL EXAMPLES.

WAR is a costly and serious venture. Once the die is cast there can be no drawing back, for better or for worse the struggle must be fought out to the bitter end. It is essential, then, that before the gauntlet is thrown down the chances of success or failure shall be carefully weighed. This can only be done by having complete information as to the strength and resources, both of the enemy and of our own side. The same remarks apply to every battle and occurrence during a war. The side which is best supplied with information and is able to deny it to the enemy engages in combat with advantage to itself and a corresponding disadvantage to the enemy. Information is the very essence of war and of every operation from start to finish. So thoroughly has this fact been established by

past wars that it would seem as if it were superfluous to reiterate it, but, if military history proves one point more than another, it most distinctly proves that campaign after campaign, battle after battle has been lost, victory after victory been shorn of its results for want of good information. In many cases it was impossible to obtain the desired information, but more often it could have been secured with comparatively little trouble, and unfortunately it was too often given away to the enemy when some slight precaution could have retained it. Never was a more piteous cry heard from the battlefield than that of Marshal Bazaine, at the battle of Spicheren, in 1870, "*Donnez moi des nouvelles pour me tranquilliser.*" That such a cry should be heard, that the same mistakes should recur with terrible persistency appears to be due to lack of experience and to carelessness. Of the latter little need be said, it is the outcome of the former. Experience itself is a different matter, it can be obtained directly or indirectly. Directly by personal knowledge of war; this, however, when war breaks out is the possession of a favoured few who may have served in former campaigns. Indirectly it can be procured by all by a study of past wars which gives us the experience of others. Fortified by this knowledge, we may enter on a campaign with some

hope that we may not be found totally wanting in the task of seeking information and of denying it to the enemy. Lacking the same, we can trust only to picking up experience as we go along. In the long run we shall certainly obtain it, but only after many failures and bitter disappointments, a price far too high to pay when it means the useless waste of valuable lives.

From our earliest war with the Roman invaders, down to the last Boer war every campaign contains useful lessons. Julius Cæsar, having conquered Gaul, did not attempt the invasion of Britain till he had endeavoured to obtain from merchants, who were in the habit of trading with the inhabitants, information as to the size of the island, the names and strength of the tribes, their system of war, their manners and customs, and the most convenient harbours. He failed to get satisfactory information in this manner, so sent Caius Volusenus in a ship of war to reconnoitre the island. This officer not caring to trust himself among the Britons did not land, but contented himself with viewing the shore from a distance. After an absence of five days he returned with his report which seems to have been of little value, for the first place where the Romans attempted to land was so commanded by cliffs, from which the Britons, who were drawn up to oppose the landing, could

with ease have thrown hard missiles on to the decks of the vessels, that Cæsar determined to try another place. The Roman fleet accordingly bore away to a point some seven miles distant, while on shore the Britons sent off their cavalry and charioteers to head off the invaders. Surging behind their mounted men went the British footmen, and as the Romans leapt from their boats, they were met by horse and foot, who rushed into the water to meet the advancing boats. Discipline and superior arms at length enabled the Romans to force a landing, but it is worth noting that the place was anything but a satisfactory spot for landing, there being neither roadstead nor harbour, and when, that same night, a severe storm arose, numbers of ships were wrecked, and such damage done to the remainder, that none were in condition to carry the army back to Gaul, nor was there any timber available for the repair of damages. Whether Cæsar was, or was not, misled in regard to the strength of the Britons in cavalry and chariots it is impossible to say, but it appears that he only took over with him about thirty horsemen and these had all the work they could do in protecting the Roman legions after the latter had landed. It would be interesting to know how the Britons obtained information of the actual date of the Roman landing. The



fact that they were ready, not only implies information from Gaul, but a good system of transmitting information amongst themselves, so that all should be ready to oppose the enemy.

Asser, the historian, tells us that after King Alfred had been forced, by a series of defeats at the hands of the Danes, to disband his army and to seek refuge temporarily in the forests and marshes of Somersetshire, he heard of the victory by the Earl of Devonshire over the enemy and of the death of their chief in battle, and considered that the time had come for him to strike another blow. He warned all his adherents to be ready to rendezvous at his retreat at a moment's warning, but, before moving out, he was anxious to obtain full information of the position and strength of the enemy. No one could be found who would undertake the task, it being considered far too dangerous. Failing a reliable volunteer, he decided to go himself, and, wearing the disguise of a harper, entered the Danish camp where he remained several days. He thus learnt that the Danes, holding the English in contempt, were negligent of all precautions as regards the security of their camp, the conduct of their foraging parties, etc. On return to his quarters he assembled his troops, marched against the enemy and appeared suddenly before their camp, where, directing his

attack on the most unguarded quarter, he utterly routed them.

There is much to learn from the struggle between William and Harold for the kingship of England. Harold appears to have taken no steps either to seek allies or to inform himself as to the quarter from which hostile intervention might be expected. It is more than probable that, had he sought for them, he would have been able to form alliances in France where William had many enemies and where the increase of his ducal power was greatly dreaded. Harold was certainly aware of William's intended invasion, but he had not the least inkling of the simultaneous invasion of Northumberland by the Norwegians under Hadrada, an invasion brought about by his disloyal brother Tostig. William, on the other hand, had pledged all possible foes to neutrality. Two of his allies, namely Count Eustace of Boulogne and Allan Feargant of Brittany were sworn foes to England. At Fulford Hadrada defeated the English hastily collected to oppose him, and Harold, hearing of this defeat, hurried northward. The Norwegians never seem to have dreamt that Harold would or could attempt to attack them in his turn, for the first information that they had of his presence was the sight of his banners before their scattered forces at Stamford Bridge, where Harold won

a decisive victory. Meanwhile William's preparations for invasion had been matured. Harold had for months been preparing to oppose him but when he marched northward against Hadrada his arrangements in the south were swept away and William landed unseen and unopposed. The battle of Hastings which followed set the crown of England on William's head. The latter had laid his plans most carefully, he had ensured himself against trouble in Normandy during his absence, the time for landing was well chosen, and Pevensey Bay, the place of debarkation, was a most judicious selection. To put all William's success down to good fortune would be absurd. It is sufficient that his plan was successful and, for this to have been the case, the information on which it was based must have been good, and also the arrangements for denying information to Harold.

At the battle of Lewes, which took place 14th May, 1264, between Henry III, and Simon de Montfort, where the latter was victorious, the royalist army had taken no measures to obtain information of the enemy's advance and was surprised, having barely time to form line of battle. Later, on the 31st July, 1265, Prince Edward surprised the Earl's son at Kenilworth, having previously learnt from a female spy that the enemy's camp was unguarded. From Ken-

ilworth he marched straight to attack the Earl himself at Evesham, taking measures to prevent the latter learning of his son's defeat. When the Prince's banners appeared before Evesham they were at first supposed to be those of the Earl's son, and it was not till a man (a barber) was sent up the abbey tower that the mistake was discovered. This disregard of reconnaissance was fatal to the Earl, who was caught in a trap in a bend of the river, with unfordable water at his back.

In 1367 King Robert of Scotland sent defiance to Edward III, and prepared an army of 24,000 men. Edward immediately ordered Lords Marsham, Mowbray, and Hereford to watch the border, while he himself marched northwards, collecting troops en route. Breaking through the outpost lines, the Scots crossed into England without anyone being aware of their passage, until the smoke of the burning villages, far to the rear of the outpost lines, gave the news. Edward had, by this time, joined his advanced detachments and immediately set out to pursue the enemy, but, after a fatiguing march, gave up the idea of overtaking them, and determined instead to intercept them on their return journey. No attempt seems to have been made to detach a small force, or even to send single individuals to watch and report on the enemy, for, when the

army reached the Tyne, it was believed that they were still behind in Northumberland, engaged in their work of pillage and devastation. It is also worth noting that, when Edward arrived in camp, no one in his army had the remotest idea where they themselves were, and it was only ascertained from peasants that they were fourteen leagues from Newcastle, and eleven from Carlisle, at both of which places detachments had been posted to watch the border. Being quite in the dark as to the whereabouts of the enemy, the King issued a proclamation that whoever brought in news would be rewarded with a grant of £100 a year in land, and would be knighted. Fifteen to sixteen knights and esquires started off at once, in separate directions, and, four days later, Thomas de Rokesby came galloping in with the news that the Scots were encamped close at hand, and had been a whole week in camp expecting the English, being just as much in the dark as to the movements of King Edward, as he was of theirs.

About the latter end of 1334, when the French were besieging a small English garrison in Auberoche Castle, in Aquitaine, Earl Derby ordered some detachments to concentrate and march to their relief. Somehow, these measures failed, and only Sir Walter Manny marched



thither with 300 lances and 600 archers, whereas the besiegers were from 10,000 to 12,000 strong. Nothing was, however, too hopeless for Sir Walter Manny who, turning to his men, said that, small as their force was, it would be cowardice not to attempt to relieve their friends, and proposed a charge through the enemy's camp. All agreed, so skirting the woods silently and reaching the enemy's rear they charged down with waving banners and pennons. The enemy were utterly surprised and dashed about wildly endeavouring to form into small groups, but the archers, who followed the men at arms closely, shot so well that the enemy were unable to assemble in any formed mass. Despite the great disparity of force, the French were utterly routed with the assistance of the garrison who made a sortie. The Earl of Lisle, commanding the French, and many other personages of high rank, were taken prisoners. All this came about because the French, believing themselves secure, took no precautions for security. Edward III was not to be so easily caught while engaged in the siege of Calais, for all possible avenues of approach were so carefully guarded that King Philip of France, who had been helplessly wandering round and round, hoping to find some way of relieving the besieged, had at last to confess himself baffled,

and sent four knights to Edward with the quaint message that he was most anxious to fight but was unable to find a passage and requested that the English would come out of their lines and give battle on some more suitable ground. Edward, however, refused to give up any of the advantages of his position, and pointed out that he had been waiting before Calais for nearly a year and that, had Philip wished to fight, he might have come before.

During the Black Prince's inroad into the provinces south of the Loire he, being unable to cross the river, determined to retreat to Bordeaux, but was followed up by a body of three hundred French lances. These, when near the narrow defile of Ramorantin, pushed on ahead of the English advanced guard and laid an ambush in the pass. The advanced guard entered the pass and, when nearly clear, heard the French coming down full gallop behind them. Turning about the English opened out and permitted the French to charge through the intervals with a loss to the former of only five or six men unhorsed. Directly the French had passed through, the English, in turn, closing their ranks, charged down on the enemy's rear, broke them completely and pursued with great effect. The attempt of the French to follow the Prince was thus checked and for some days

both he and the French king were quite unaware of each other's whereabouts. A few days after the Prince was marching through the woods of Chauvigny, near Poitiers, and sent forward a small body of sixty well-armed horse to reconnoitre. These were met by a large body of French cavalry who charged down on them, on which they retreated to the main body, which had halted on a heath outside the wood. The French, charging impetuously, were met by the Prince's battalion and were almost cut to pieces, and so shaken that they did not inform King John of the Prince's approach. The latter, finding the French so near, saw that his retreat was cut off and that he would have to fight, so advanced the same day to within two short leagues of Poitiers, but took the precaution of increasing his reconnoitring party to two hundred horse. These soon came upon the whole French army, covering the plain in apparent disorder and quite unaware of the close approach of the English. Unable to restrain themselves, this advanced guard charged, regardless of odds, and set the whole army in commotion. King John, hearing this, ordered his troops to turn back and camp in the open fields. Contrary to the behaviour of the French cavalry, earlier in the day, the English cavalry informed the Prince of the proximity of the enemy, so he



selected a good position and commenced entrenching it in the expectancy of the coming battle. The failure of the French to maintain close contact with the English kept them ignorant of the great distress the latter were in as regards supplies, for, had the French known this and had they restrained themselves from giving battle, and contented themselves with simply investing the position, the Prince would have been forced to surrender. To such straits indeed was he reduced and so hopeless did he consider the chances of victory that he opened up negotiations in which he agreed to give up all his conquests during the campaign, all his prisoners free of ransom, and swear a truce for seven years, if only he was allowed to march unmolested to Bordeaux. King John, unaware of the causes which led to these overtures and holding the small English army in contempt, determined to crush it in battle. Secure in their entrenchments and abattis, the English held themselves in leash while the French hopelessly battered themselves against the position, but the Prince knew that simple passive resistance would never relieve him from his difficulties, a victory must be gained and the French army destroyed, and this could only be done by attacking the enemy in turn. Carefully was an opportunity watched for, and at the right moment a

body of three hundred men at arms and three hundred archers slipped out of the position, crossed a low hill and came down unseen on the flank of the Duke of Normandy's division, which was at the foot of the hill. Directly the Prince saw the success of this flank attack, which was rendered possible because the French were not watching their flanks, he remounted all his men at arms and gave the archers orders to follow up. With cries of "St. George for Guienne" the famous counterstroke was given. Down went the Duke of Athen's division, then the German allies gave way and the charge was carried on to the Duke of Normandy's division which, attacked in front and on the flank, turned and fled. King John's division was soon left to bear the brunt of the battle and advanced to retrieve the day, but a short, sharp struggle and it too gave way and Poitiers, which at one time looked like a trap for the English, became memorable as the scene of one of our grandest victories.

During the Prince's campaign in Spain, in 1367, after the concentration at Pampeluna, information as to the Spanish army was lacking. Sir William Felton volunteered to reconnoitre. His request being granted, he started with 160 lances five days before the army moved. He came on the enemy at St. Domingo and con-

siderably alarmed them by a sudden attack, but, having found them, did not forget to send back information, nor did he fail to hang on to their line of march, sending constant reports till the Prince came up and joined him at Vittoria. Having personally reported to the Prince, Sir William again rode out to reconnoitre. The same day a body of 6000 Spanish cavalry under Don Tello surprised Sir Hugh Calverley's division of free lances, and utterly routed them. On Don Tello's return to the Spanish camp, he fell in with Sir William's reconnoitring party, now increased to 200 lances, who drew up on a small hill to meet the attack. The odds were desperate, but still the little band, without any hope of succour, fought from sunrise till near dark, making constant countercharges down the hill, careful each time not to advance too far, but to wheel about and regain their position. At last Don Tello, ashamed of the resistance made, formed his men into one compact mass, advanced uphill against the now much diminished band, and slew all except a few boys who managed to escape on horseback. This is a good example to show that there comes a time when information must be fought for, and reconnoitring parties must be strongly supported; there must also be communication between them and the supports. The following example also impresses this fact.

In 1379, the Duke of Northumberland who was sent to invade Scotland, sent forward an advanced guard of 300 men at arms and 300 archers to Melrose, under Sir Thomas Musgrave. On arrival at Melrose the latter despatched two well-mounted scouts to search for the enemy, but these, falling into an ambush, were captured. Hearing from the prisoners of the presence of Musgrave at Melrose, the Scots determined to attack him, but rain delayed the plan. Next day, by the chance meeting of two of the opposing foraging parties, Musgrave learnt of the enemy's presence. A fight shortly after ensued in which Musgrave was utterly defeated. No sort of connection appears to have been maintained between Musgrave and Northumberland, for the latter knew nothing of the defeat till, marching on towards Melrose in search of his advanced guard, he came on the fugitives fleeing from the late fight.

When Prince Rupert, at the age of twenty-three years, arrived in England, in 1642, and at Nottingham took over the command of the Royalist horse, they consisted of only 800 men, poorly armed, devoid of discipline and with untrained horses. Soon after assuming command he was sent by King Charles to relieve Worcester against the Earl of Essex, who was marching against the town. Rupert fully expected to

meet the Earl en route, and marched with the greatest precautions. On arrival at the town he, however, threw aside all caution, permitted his principal officers to enter the town, and, though he himself remained with the men, he allowed them to rest and refresh themselves, without throwing out any vedettes or patrols. While thus reposing in the most perfect confidence, he was the first to discover some 500 of the enemy's horse marching within musket shot of him, down a narrow lane. There was literally no time to issue orders or to buckle on armour, courage alone could save the day, and Rupert was not deficient in this quality. He sprang on his horse and, calling on all to follow him, charged straight at the mouth of the lane, followed by his men in irregular order. Strange to relate the enemy never stood to meet this attack, but turned and fled down the lane, and were pursued with considerable loss. From the facts of the case it is almost certain that the Roundheads were marching down the lane without even an advanced file, and were as ignorant of the presence of the Royalists as the latter were of theirs.

Soon after this the King determined to march on London. To oppose him the Earl had thrown out outposts towards Hereford and Shrewsbury, but these did their work so badly that, on the 19th October, he was surprised to hear that the



King had interposed between him and London. A battle had to be fought to enable the Earl to regain communication with the capital. Accordingly, on 23rd October, the battle of Edgehill took place, which ended in favour of the Earl, for the King gave up his idea of marching on London and returned to Oxford. It might have been a decisive victory for the King but for the poor handling of his cavalry. Lord Wilmot, who commanded them on the left wing, performed his duty so badly that the Parliamentary troops, under Sir William Balfour, were able to surprise the King's left flank. On the other side Prince Rupert, commanding on the right wing, charged the opposing horse with such vigour that they broke and fled, but instead of pursuing prudently, and maintaining contact with the army, he went headlong after the enemy and was seen no more.

Soon after the King's execution, Cromwell led an army into Scotland against Prince Charles and General Leslie. At the battle of Dunbar, 3rd September, 1650, the Royalists were defeated and retired to a position at Torwood, whither Cromwell advanced to attack them, but, finding their position too strong, endeavoured to pass round their rear. In this he was successful, but Leslie, nothing daunted, evolved what might have been a masterpiece of strategy, had his in-

formation been good. He gave up his line of communications with Scotland to Cromwell and, leaving his camp with the greatest secrecy, marched straight into England. Cromwell was astounded when, after the lapse of twenty-four hours, he heard that he had been given the slip. The Royalists were by that time in full march to raise the northern counties, but the information that they had received of the English being favourable to their cause proved false. This was depressing, but matters were made worse by the Royalist lords refusing to serve under Leslie. These dissensions gave Cromwell time to recover his lost ground, and by rapid marches to interpose between the Royalists and Worcester. His presence in their front was a complete surprise, and they were utterly routed at the battle of Worcester, on 3rd September, 1651.

At the battle of Sedgemoor, on the night of 15th and 16th July, 1685, the Duke of Monmouth made a night attack on the royalist army, under Lord Feversham. The information on which the attack was planned and carried out was based on the report of a farmer, named Godfrey, who stated that the royalists, under the impression that Monmouth was retreating, were keeping a most careless watch over their camp, and that the present was a good opportunity to attack them. This was correct so far as it went, but

Godfrey failed to inform Monmouth that the camp was surrounded by a deep and wide drain called the Bussex Rhine, the banks of which were unsound and the bottom deep with mud. To prove Godfrey's report Monmouth climbed Bridgewater church steeple, and, with the aid of a telescope, not only saw the Royalist camp, but recognized the uniform of the Dumbarton regiment. The Bussex Rhine did not, however, show up and ignorant of this obstacle the attack was ordered, but so impassable was the drain and so utterly unprovided for in the plan, that all order and cohesion were lost before the attack even commenced. This is a good instance of trusting to the report of a man unacquainted with the difficulties such an obstacle would produce in a night attack. The careless watch kept by the Royalists was due to the bad service of their cavalry. Lord Feversham had learnt from spies that Monmouth was retreating, and to check this report sent a troop of the Life Guards to follow Monmouth, but the commander failed to maintain contact, though the distance separating the two armies was a mere nothing. In addition to this precaution, strong cavalry picquets were ordered out to protect the camp, but these simply took up casual positions and sent no patrols out. Monmouth's advance was, fortunately, at the last moment, seen by a ved-



ette, and this man behaved with remarkable intelligence for, firing his pistol, he galloped into camp calling on all to turn out, as the rebels were on them.

In the wars with Louis XIV, in 1702, the British troops, under the Earl of Athlone, were opposed to the French, under the Duke of Burgundy. The two armies lay facing each other on opposite banks of the Rhine, the former covering the siege of Keyerswaert, the latter endeavouring to raise the siege. To effect his purpose the Duke of Burgundy suddenly left his camp and attempted to interpose between the besiegers and the besieged by passing round by way of Gennesp. It was not till noon the following day that the Earl of Athlone was aware that he had been tricked. When he heard the news he at once divined its importance and started off for Gennesp. It was a very close thing but the French were anticipated, though some of their troops did actually manage to head the British advanced guard, who were only saved by the timely arrival of the main body. The remark made by the historian of this incident is worthy of note, as showing what the prevalent idea was as to the method of obtaining information and of utilising cavalry. He writes—"My Lord of Athlone, at the Head of the Cavalry, *in rear of the*

*Foot*,\* behaved with great bravery, but was much blamed for not having better intelligence." "This small army narrowly escaped being cut to pieces for want of good intelligence, which shows the necessity a general lies under to keep a number of trusty Spies." Soon after this affair the Duke of Marlborough took over command and almost immediately played a similar trick upon the French who "were surprised when they found that my Lord had given them the slip ; but more<sup>d</sup> so when they found he had got between them and home, whereupon they decamped."

From 1702 to 1711 the English played a somewhat inglorious part in the Wars of the Spanish Succession. On the one side were ranged the English, Austrians, Germans, Dutch and Portuguese, and the Spanish adherents of the Archduke Charles, who, as Charles III, claimed the Spanish throne ; while on the other the French and the bulk of the Spaniards supported Philip, Duke of Anjou, who had been crowned Philip V. On 11th November, 1710, the allies, under Marshall Staremburg, abandoned Madrid and marched northward towards Barcelona, being covered by a rearguard of English, under General Stanhope, of 2,536 men, including 640 cavalry. Soon after the allies had

\* Not in the original.

left Madrid the French, under Marshal Vendome, entered the city while Vallejo, a noted Spanish leader, was sent with four thousand horse to pursue the allies. Vallejo did his work in a most excellent manner. Carefully concealing his main body, he maintained contact with the allies by means of patrols only, and was soon able to report that the allies were marching with a long day's march between the main body and rearguard. On receipt of this news Vendome determined to attack Stanhope while isolated from Staremburg, and despatched General Thuoy with four thousand grenadiers to reinforce Vallejo, while the remainder of the army followed under his own command. Meanwhile Vallejo kept Stanhope under the closest observation by means of a cordon of patrols. On 6th December Stanhope was at Brihuega and Staremburg at Cifuentes, fourteen miles distant. "Being under the impression that Vendome was still a long distance off, the English commander took no steps to ascertain, by scouting parties, the position of the enemy, nor even, although the town was in a hollow girdled by hills, to provide for the security of the force by posting picquets." On the 8th Vallejo revealed his true strength to Stanhope and the latter, who had hitherto been under the impression that he had only to deal with insignificant patrols, became

so alarmed that he despatched his aide-de-camp, Captain Cosby, to Staremburg for assistance, and himself began to barricade the streets and loop-hole the buildings. By 3 p.m. Vallejo was joined by Thuoy and later on Vendome with twelve guns arrived. These troops had marched 179 miles in seven days. Early on the 9th Stanhope, refusing a summons to surrender, was attacked and defended himself till the evening when, finding that he had lost heavily, that his ammunition was running short and that there were no signs of Staremburg marching to his relief he surrendered at 6 p.m. It was with the greatest difficulty that Captain Cosby managed to elude Vallejo's patrols, the consequence being that he did not reach Staremburg's camp till late. Since he had left Brihuega the situation too had changed, for Vallejo had been joined by Thuoy, Staremburg did not know this and saw no reason for haste, and so did not move till the morning of the 9th, nor was the march itself hurried, for at 6.30 p.m. he was still four miles from Brihuega and Stanhope had already surrendered. This delay had cost Stanhope dear and it had also given Vendome time to throw a small detachment across Staremburg's path. These the latter found at 6.30 p.m., barring his further advance, so, it being late, he fired some guns in order to let Stanhope know

he was near at hand and took up a position with 2,900 horse, 10,800 foot, and twenty guns at Villa Viciosa. It seems certain that not a patrol, nor even a single courier, except Cosby, had passed between Staremburg and Stanhope, for at 6.30 p.m. the former had no idea that the latter had surrendered, nor the latter at 6 p.m. that reinforcements were so close. By the morning of the 10th Vendome had been joined by the remainder of his army and now, with 8,000 horse, 18,000 foot and 28 guns, he was ready to attack. At 2 p.m. the allies were attacked and a curious thing happened. Ignorance of the enemy had resulted in Stanhope's surrender, but ignorance of the action of his own troops was to cost Vendome the battle. The two armies were ranged opposite each other in the usual manner, with a right and left wing and a centre. On each side the left wing was destroyed early in the afternoon. Vendome saw his left retiring in disorder and believing the battle lost, led the fugitives six miles back to Torrija. The allied left was not only similarly driven from the field but Vallejo, who commanded the French right wing and had been responsible for this success, carried his charge right round the allied left flank and fell on Staremburg's supply and transport columns and destroyed a quantity of supplies. So far then



the balance of success lay with the French, but Vendome, ignorant of Vallejo's success, had left the field. Not so Staremburg who, in the most determined manner, attacked the French centre and finally, by nightfall, forced it to retire. Vallejo, seeing the centre go, was forced to follow suit and the allies were left in possession of the field of battle, including all the French guns. The destruction of his supplies and transport, however, placed Staremburg in such a predicament that he was forced to retreat next morning. Too late Vendome learnt of Vallejo's success, he then advanced to attack Staremburg but the latter had made good his escape.



## CHAPTER I.

### STRATEGICAL, TACTICAL AND PROTECTIVE RECONNAISSANCE.

SUFFICIENT will have been learnt from the examples in the foregoing chapter to show how vital it is not only to success, but to safety to have good information. There are practically only two means by which this can be procured in the field, one by cavalry reconnaissance, and the other from the reports of spies, prisoners, etc. Long experience has proved that the latter system is never to be relied on as the principal source of information. It is undoubtedly extremely useful at times, as a means of supplementing and corroborating information already obtained, but as a rule, if anything is learnt in this manner that was not known before, it should by all possible means be checked before action is taken on it. The sole reliable source a general then has of ascertaining the enemy's strength, resources, movements, etc., is his cavalry, and this arm enables him at the same time, by forming a screen round his forces, to deny to the enemy

similar knowledge. To obtain information and at the same time to deny it, to render the enemy blindfold, while securing to himself the advantage of open eyes, will be the first task of a commander who seeks to control his own and the enemy's movements. Theoretically, both sides will endeavour to gain this advantage, it will consequently have to be fought for and the campaign will open with cavalry combats, each side seeking to drive the other from the field. Practically it has often occurred that one side has withdrawn from this initial struggle and given the other a free hand. Such a lapse of duty can only be attributed to sheer ignorance of the use of cavalry, and of the importance of information. Inequality in numbers between the opposing cavalry is no excuse for withdrawing this arm from its legitimate work, for superiority consists not in numbers but in having a true conception of what is required and a determination to attain it, the rest will be supplied by enterprise, boldness and stratagem. Assuming that one side has gained this superiority, or that it has been allowed to gain it by an inactive hostile cavalry or inexperienced commander, the next act will be so to picquet the hostile army with a system of patrols that it will be unable to move hand or foot without every action, every march and every manœuvre being noted and reported. The way

Lord Stanhope was kept under observation with such fatal results to his force, has already been mentioned (see page 23). This system produces a most depressing effect on the enemy, destroys the rest of the troops, makes their commanders irresolute and, generally speaking, lowers the morale of the whole army. Colonel Bonie, a French officer, describing how the German cavalry shadowed the French army in 1870, says, "some scouts were mistaken for the head of numerous cavalry columns, we then retired. From that moment until we reached Luneville their scouts watched us unceasingly, linked to their army by horsemen, they gave an exact account of our positions, of our halts, of our movements, and as they watched us from some little distance, incessantly appearing and disappearing, they spread uneasiness." . . . "The service was so well performed by the Prussian cavalry, that we marched, so to speak, within a net which enclosed us in its meshes." All available cavalry will be utilized in this process of observing the enemy, but the actual work of picqueting and collecting information will be delegated to small patrols, while the main body remains concentrated. The principal reason for using patrols is that they can subsist more easily, travel longer distances and attract less attention than larger bodies. The commander of a patrol

will usually be a selected officer, or a staff officer will be deputed to ride with the patrol, but both of these may fall sick, be wounded or taken prisoner and, if they alone form the brains of the patrol, the latter will become a useless factor. It is incumbent then that, on the loss of their leader, all who form part of a patrol shall be able to carry out his task. It is obvious also that many occasions may arise when chance may throw before even a private soldier some great and valuable discovery which a trained mind will realize, while an untrained one will not even see that a discovery has been made. The whole question is a matter of training and of taking a personal interest in the plans of the commander, so far as he permits them to be known, and endeavouring to forward them by all possible means. Our "Combined Training of 1905" laid down "It should be the constant aim of every officer and man during a campaign to furnish directly to his immediate superior for transmission to the General Staff, such information as may be of value." To appreciate the value of any item of information, to act up to the ideal of trying to assist the commander is to play the game. To join in a game is not sufficient, it must be played with skill, judgment and co-operation and these imply an intimate knowledge of its object, rules and principles. So also, in order

to obtain the best results, is a knowledge of the art and object of war essential to those who join in it, and, above all, to those, no matter what their rank, who ride out to search for the information necessary to forward a plan. By this knowledge alone will action be directed in the right channel, restrained from going in a wrong one, the true be sifted from the false, and the possibilities of what may at first be obscure be appreciated. There are certain terms which have been introduced, of recent years, in regard to the employment of cavalry such as "Strategic Cavalry," "Protective Cavalry," "Divisional Cavalry," "Strategical and Tactical Patrols." What do these mean? Why this sub-division? Above all, what does Strategy mean? A simple definition of the term is not difficult, but even this cannot be understood without a clear appreciation of the object of War and how it must be attained.

Nations go to war for a variety of causes, but, whatever the cause, the object remains the same, namely, to force the enemy to submit to their will. This can only be done by so destroying or weakening the strength of the enemy that they shall no longer be able to oppose the victors, but agree to their will and accept their terms.

The strength of a nation lies in three essential points, viz. :—(1) Its military and naval power ;



(2) the resources of the country, to which may be added its topographical nature, and (3) the will and determination of the nation. The steps necessary to destroy these correspond in order of sequence to the items themselves, for (1) "The military power must be destroyed, that is, reduced to such a state as not to be able to prosecute the war." (2) "The country must be conquered, for out of the country a new military force may be formed," and (3) "The will and determination of the enemy must be broken, in order that they may be forced to accept the terms dictated to them." The necessity of strictly adhering to this sequence is of paramount importance. The strength of an army is formed of two main elements, physical and moral.

Physical strength consists of the number of troops available, their armament, equipment, and all the various means available for keeping them in an efficient fighting condition, such as reserves of men, horses, ordnance and other supplies, and transport for the same.

Moral strength, usually called "morale," consists of all the various factors which make an army fight bravely and confidently, whether it is superior or inferior in numbers, etc., to the enemy, whether it is victorious or defeated. It includes such elements as bravery, determina-



tion, obedience, loyalty, discipline, training, power to stand reverses, panic and exhaustion, etc., and above all, it lies in the spirit with which an army takes up the cause of the war.

Morale, however, does not lie only with the army, for, since the army is only the representation of the nation's strength on the field of battle, it is necessary that the morale of the nation shall constantly support that of the army. The morale of the nation consists in the manner in which it takes up the cause of the war, how far the ministers and people support the commander-in-chief in his plans, how little they interfere with him and force him by their clamour to carry out operations against his better judgment, how they receive the news from the seat of war, encouraging the army when it is victorious, and abstaining from depression when there has been a disaster, how willingly they respond to the call for men to join the fighting ranks, and how even the wives, sweethearts and sisters encourage the men to enlist.

So great an authority as the Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte is stated to have said that morale was as three to one in regard to physical strength, but even this seems to be an underestimate. A well equipped army is indeed a powerful weapon, but its true power lies in its

morale. It may well occur that an army may suffer the most severe losses and its position appear almost hopeless, but it may extricate itself from even the most desperate situation and, having retired, recuperate its strength by reorganisation and reinforcements. The means by which it extricates itself will be various, such as rear-guards, etc., but all dependent on morale of a very high order. Theoretically, if an equal number of rifles be engaged on either side, the combat must be a drawn one, for one rifle must be taken to be as good as another. If this be true then an inferior number of rifles must succumb to a superior number, but it is not the number of rifles alone which decides a combat. Something, of course, is due to the manner in which the rifles are used, but it is the morale of the men behind the rifles and that of the commanders who direct their actions which is the dominant factor, for by it mainly will it be possible for an inferior force to combat successfully a superior one. To preserve morale and destroy that of the enemy is a point then which must be most seriously taken to heart, for it is at all times a vital essential to success, worth many times three to one in numbers. It has a tendency to ebb and flow. The ebb must be guarded against and the flow encouraged. The tendency to ebb is most conspicuous when

heavy losses and great physical exhaustion have been incurred in a severely contested battle. It is then the defeated side must strenuously endeavour to preserve their morale by showing a bold front to the enemy, for it is in this manner only that they will retain their fighting power for a more favourable opportunity. It is then, too, that the victors must call morale to their aid and make a supreme effort, must throw aside nature's demands for rest and continue to strike the enemy with the object of shattering their morale. The physical destruction of the enemy effected, and still remaining to be effected, must be considered but as a means to an end, the end being the destruction of morale, and consequently will power to continue the combat. To ascertain the elements which constitute the physical and moral strength of the hostile army, to observe how these fluctuate, at one time increasing and at another decreasing in force, to watch for favourable opportunities for inflicting the maximum loss is the great object of reconnaissance, whether it be strategical or tactical.

The second and third items which form a nation's strength are the resources of the country and the will and determination of the people. These two points may be taken together and they will also have to be overcome, for it is possible that after the standing army is

destroyed the nation may continue the struggle by resorting to irregular warfare and, though this system of war can never avail against organised warfare, still it prolongs the war, makes it more costly and gives the enemy time to call in allies to their assistance. Such was the case in Spain and Portugal, in 1808, when Napoleon Bonaparte defeated the Spanish and Portuguese armies and placed his brother Joseph on the throne of Spain. No sooner had he returned to France, than the people took to guerilla warfare and prolonged it so hardily that England was induced to go to their assistance. Again, in 1870, the Germans destroyed the French armies and captured their Emperor, but Gambetta then raised the nation and carried on what has been called "The People's War." In the last Boer war we dispersed the Boer armies, only to find that the war was renewed by independent bands of irregulars. Usually such national risings have failed owing to the occupation of the capital and country by organised hostile forces who, with the administration and resources of the country in their hands, have reduced the conquered to such a condition that they had neither the power nor the will to continue the struggle. Even irregulars cannot exist without arsenals and foundries for the manufacture of arms and

ammunition, nor can the different irregular bands communicate and co-operate if their railways and telegraphs are in the hands of the enemy and, above all, a nation cannot exist if its internal machinery, commerce and industry are dislocated.

Thus we see that war aims at

1st.—The destruction of the hostile armies.

2nd.—The capture of some portion of the hostile territory.

The latter is called “ The Political Objective ” of the campaign. Its possession gives the victor a prize to retain, or to hold in pledge, till the enemy redeem it, by accepting the terms offered. It cannot be achieved by marching through hostile territory, regardless of the armies defending it, the advance must be made in successive stages, at each of which the enemy's defensive power must be broken before proceeding another stage. Thus it is seen that though its ultimate capture must be borne in view throughout the war, it ever remains a secondary consideration to the great and primary object, viz., the destruction of the hostile army. This destruction is brought about by a series of battles, and it is the province of strategy to arrange to bring the enemy to battle, in order so to destroy and weaken his forces that he may be rendered incapable of defending that which



we seek to obtain. Strategy may then be defined as the art of producing battles, and arranging for them to take place at such time and place as will further the plan of the campaign. It further aims at bringing into play, when the battle takes place, forces and advantages superior to those of the enemy. This is the true conception of strategy, the provision of battles for purposes of destruction, while victory, the successful act of destruction, gains the object for which the battle was arranged. Tactics are the means by which a victory is gained, and by which, when the enemy have been brought to battle, the maximum loss is inflicted on their physical and moral strength. Strategy may at times endeavour to turn the enemy out of a position by a manœuvre in preference to a battle, but this is simply to defer the act of destruction to a more suitable time or place. Such would be the case if the enemy held a position too strong to be attacked, when it would be necessary to manœuvre them out of it so that the fight should occur in a place of our selection and not of theirs. The battle, being an attempt at destruction and the latter being inflicted with the purpose of wresting some object from the enemy, it necessarily follows that every victory should produce some definite result and not be barren as has frequently been



the case. Many a fruitless victory has been ascribed to the physical exhaustion of the victors, but it has often been clearly proved that it was due to sheer ignorance of what had occurred on the field of battle, of the condition and movements of the enemy and even of that of the victors themselves. A case in point is the battle of Bull Run, on 21st July, 1861. Here the Federals, in full confidence of victory, attacked the Confederates but were repulsed with severe loss and driven in disorder from the field. Had an energetic pursuit been carried out, the Federal army would, undoubtedly, have been annihilated, and it is not improbable that the war would have ended there and then. It was, however, not carried out and the Federals were permitted to retire and recuperate. Twice during the battle the Confederate commander, feeling victory within his grasp, endeavoured to direct his reserves against the flanks and rear of the enemy, but on each occasion countermanded the order. On the first occasion the reserve brigades had actually crossed the Bull Run and become slightly engaged with the enemy's reserves, but were recalled because far away on the Confederate left flank a strong body of troops was seen approaching. These turned out to be a Confederate brigade, under Brigadier General Elzey, coming up to reinforce. When

the mistake was realised the order was again issued for the reserve brigades to cross the stream and attack. Two of the three reserve brigades moved forward and, passing through the Federal abandoned camps, where cooking pots were still on the fire, struck the enemy's line of retreat and arrived within artillery range of masses of fugitives, but, when in the act of opening fire and deploying for attack, were again recalled. This second counter order was due to an impression that, so far from flying in disorder, the enemy were actually engaged in turning the Confederate right flank. Here again the troops, which were taken for the enemy working round the right flank, were a Confederate brigade, under Brigadier-General Jones. This brigade was one of the three reserve brigades sent originally to attack but which, in obedience to the first order of recall, was coming back into position at the time that the second order was issued.

It is in no way contrary to the statements above made to assert that victory is not always essential to success, for great results may be obtained even at the cost of defeat. A case in point is the battle of Kernstown where, with a far inferior force, "Stonewall Jackson" attacked the Federals under Shields. Jackson was severely defeated, but his attack secured a most

important strategical victory in that the Federal plans were, at a most critical moment for the Confederates, completely disarranged. The audacity of the attack led the Federal cabinet to believe that Jackson had been heavily reinforced and that Washington, their capital, was threatened. To cover the latter the main plan of campaign was temporarily abandoned. Troops from all quarters were massed to oppose Jackson's small force, a promised reinforcement of 40,000 men withheld from General McClellan, who was besieging Richmond and, finally, discord, which later on had serious results, was sown between the cabinet and commander-in-chief.

Every operation of war must be dependent on a carefully considered plan. The thinking out of this plan is called an "appreciation of the situation," the first essential step in which is to have a clear conception of the object in view and a firm determination to carry it out. The next step is to note how the troops are disposed towards forwarding the object, and then to decide how they shall be re-disposed and directed towards its attainment. In forming this decision due consideration must be paid to the strength and disposition of the hostile forces, for which purpose the best available information is required. Eventual success will depend, not

on the skill with which the plan has been conceived, but on the skill displayed in its execution and on the accuracy with which the designs and counter-dispositions of the enemy have been gauged. Never was sounder advice given than the following :—

“ In making a plan of operations it is always well to begin first by getting a clear idea of what our intentions are, and only then to ask oneself what the opponent may do to foil them. If the opposite course were taken, and one were first to consider what the opponent could do, and then deduce one's plan, the latter would be dependent on the opponent's will. This would be to allow him to lay down the course of procedure and to deprive oneself of the most important factor in the conduct of war, viz., the initiative. . . . And so, in order to keep our attention fixed upon the objective of our operation, we must constantly fight against drawing imaginary conclusions which partial news of the enemy may cause our minds to formulate. A good general follows the plan which he has decided upon until the enemy opposes some obstacle in his path ; then he operates with the object of destroying the hostile masses which have placed themselves in his way.”—(*Von Verdy.*)

However correct it may be to hold that the

initiative is the most important factor of success in war, there can be no doubt that good information is the means by which a commander is able to seize and retain the initiative. Frederick the Great remarked, "If one could always be acquainted beforehand with the enemy's designs one could always beat him with an inferior force." Initiative is sometimes understood to mean "the taking of responsibility," but it really means "to take the lead in beginning." From a military point of view it means laying down the law to the enemy, forcing him to follow our lead, to conform to our plan and to give up his own. This is managed by coming rapidly to a decision and proceeding as rapidly to carry out that decision, while the enemy are still ignorant of our intentions and undecided as to their own. Secrecy of design too has played a most important part in war. Stonewall Jackson said "If I thought my coat knew what I intended to do I would take it off and burn it." Of him it is also written "All his great movements were veiled in mystery. So important an element did he consider this to be that he would mask his designs with elaborate care, often instituting minute inquiries in regard to roads and watercourses in a direction which he meant *not* to take. Having in this way thrown spies upon the wrong scent,



he would suddenly strike camp and march off in the opposite direction, his destination was unknown even to his own officers. For the same purpose he would often camp at cross roads so as to make it impossible for any one to infer which way he would go." Surprise means a sudden and unexpected attack on an unsuspecting enemy and is compounded of two factors, viz., secrecy and rapidity; secrecy of design and rapidity of execution. Stratagem is closely allied to surprise and means to employ trickery to deceive the enemy, who place themselves in a false position by either not seeing the trap or ambush laid, or else by putting a false construction on what they see. All these were factors which Jackson utilised to "mystify, mislead and surprise the enemy," and all apply to every single operation of war, whether it be carried out by any army commander or a patrol leader.

Reconnaissance is the art of procuring information for the various phases of war and is divided into

- (1) Strategical.
- (2) Tactical.
- (3) Protective.

These are very clearly defined in our "Cavalry Training," but it not infrequently happens that the essential difference between them is misunderstood. If it has been made clear that



strategy is the art of producing and arranging battles in furtherance of the plan of campaign, it will be appreciated that strategical reconnaissance is required in order to enable a commander to form his plan of campaign, and to bring the enemy to battle at such time and place as will further that plan. So too, if tactics are the means of destroying the enemy's physical and moral strength, it will be seen that tactical reconnaissance is required to enable a commander, when the enemy has been brought to battle, so to direct his forces that the enemy's physical and moral strength may be destroyed, or rather so weakened that, at that particular point, they are forced to succumb. Protective reconnaissance is at all times of vital importance, not only to protect from surprise, but to deny information to the enemy and to mystify and mislead them. In the case of General Stanhope's surrender at Brihuega (see page 24), Vallejo's cavalry action can be divided into distinct strategical and tactical phases. The former commenced when he started in pursuit of the allied army and ended as soon as he had ascertained and reported to Vendome that Stanhope was isolated from Staremburg. Tactical action began directly he showed his strength, which he did by occupying the heights above Brihuega. What steps were taken for obtaining

tactical information we are not told but must assume that Vallejo, having so far thoroughly understood and carried out his duty, did not fail to ascertain how and where Stanhope could be best attacked. In regard to protection we see how utterly Stanhope failed to take even the simplest precautions, while, on the other side, every measure was taken to deny information.

## CHAPTER II.

### STRATEGICAL, PROTECTIVE AND DIVISIONAL CAVALRY.

FOR the purposes of carrying out the various missions allotted to it cavalry is classified into three separate bodies, viz. :—

Independent or Strategical.

Protective.

Divisional.

It will be noted that there is no such division as "Tactical Cavalry." This may, at first sight, appear curious, but the above classification has nothing whatsoever to do with the actual destruction of the enemy, but is mainly for the purpose of procuring information for the one side and denying it to the other. As soon as the above service of information, etc., has been arranged, such cavalry as can be spared becomes, when the combat takes place, tactical cavalry. It is the duty of every cavalry commander, no matter what the size of his command, whether patrol, troop or brigade, to join in the combat so far as he can manage, having

due regard to the duty he may have previously been ordered to carry out.

The duties of strategical cavalry stand out clearly, they are:—To push forward and gain touch with the enemy's column, report on their dispositions, strength and direction of march, for the purpose of enabling the commander to form his plans of bringing the enemy to battle. To carry out these duties it will have to "push into the zone separating the two armies in the direction in which it is decided to reconnoitre." Meanwhile the army following in rear will have its protective cavalry thrown out in front and on the flanks to protect it from similar enterprise by the enemy's strategical cavalry. It will be of the utmost importance for the strategical cavalry to establish from the outset a superiority over the enemy's cavalry as this will render the task of exploration easier, but there must be no turning aside from the main object in view for the purpose of fighting the enemy's cavalry. Mosby, the great Confederate scout, after four years of constant war, wrote "The object of reconnaissance is not to fight, but to get information: whatever fighting is necessary is only an incident."

In order to carry out its duty of reconnaissance the strategical cavalry, which in itself is but a reconnoitring detachment of the whole

army, will throw out a series of reconnoitring detachments, while the main body marches as concentrated as possible, ready to support its detachments and break down any opposition that they may meet with. The smallest reconnoitring detachment is obviously a one-man detachment, or scout. An individual with the necessary qualifications for a scout, who can travel long distances and wander about in the enemy's lines, is a rarity, but when found is worth his weight in gold. Such men have been found, and two notable instances are Colonels Waters and Grant, who acted as scouts for the Duke of Wellington in Spain and Portugal. The great disadvantage in the one-man detachment is that he, being unaccompanied by a comrade, finds it difficult to send back his information and must either bring it in himself or send it in by friendly country folk.

General Marbot relates how, during the Peninsular War, single British officers, mounted on thoroughbred horses, watched the movements of the French army.

"These officers get within the enemy's cantonments, cross his line of march, keep for days on the flanks of his columns, always just out of range, till they can form a clear idea of the numbers and the direction of his march. After our entry into Portugal we frequently

saw observers of this kind flitting round us. It was ruin to give chase to them, even with the best-mounted horsemen. The moment the English officer saw any such approach he would set spurs to his steed, and, nimbly clearing ditches, hedges, even brooks, he would make off at such speed that our men soon lost sight of him, and perhaps saw him soon after a league further on, notebook in hand, at the top of some hillock, continuing his observations. . . . These English runners, who were the despair of the French general, from the moment we left Spain, increased in boldness and cunning as we were in front of Sobral. One could see them come out of their lines and race with the speed of stags through the vines and over the rocks to inspect the position of our troops."

The risk of individual scouts being captured and their information lost points to the advisability of supporting them with one or more men, and so we come to the patrol. In estimating the number of men required for a patrol we must consider—(1) The number of scouts required for information, and (2) the number of despatch riders for transmitting that information. Both scouts and despatch riders should work in pairs, for the scout requires a comrade to assist him at times in holding his horse, while he himself proceeds on foot, etc., while



despatches should be sent in duplicate to avoid any mischance from the rider being captured or delayed by some mishap. The minimum number then for a patrol would be four, namely, two scouts and two despatch riders. This number will suffice when the patrol has no very great distance to traverse and it will admit of two reports being transmitted, the first by the two despatch riders, the second being brought in by the scouts themselves. The leader of this party must be the principal scout, whether officer, non-commissioned officer, or trooper. Where reports have to be sent great distances and through difficult and dangerous country the number of despatch riders must be increased, but it is seldom advisable to add more than one extra set of despatch riders, or to expect more than three messages to be submitted. Thus the maximum number for a patrol should be six or eight, a greater number would be unwieldly and less likely to escape observation. If, however, owing to the distance to be traversed and the proximity of the enemy, six or eight men are considered insufficient then the best plan will be to add sufficient men to form relay posts and signal stations, with some spare horses if considered necessary. All these additional men will, however, be extras, the strength of the patrol still remaining six or

eight. Where possible, the relay posts, etc., should be established by the commander who sends out the patrol and the fact notified to the patrol leader, they would only be put under his immediate command when it was considered that he would be the best judge of where they should be posted. In any case all these points will have to be considered, and, therefore, in estimating the strength of a patrol, it will be necessary to calculate the various items as follows :—

- |                 |                  |
|-----------------|------------------|
| (1) Patrol.     | Scouts.          |
|                 | Despatch riders. |
| (2) Additional. | Relay posts.     |
|                 | Signallers.      |
|                 | Spare Horses.    |

Where the inhabitants of the country are actively hostile it will be a difficult matter for patrols to carry out their work. This the French learnt to their cost in Spain in 1808-12, and the Germans in France in 1870. In both cases the action of the inhabitants was very much the same. "Patrols and small parties seeking information were held back at every village; they carried their lives in their hands; the patrols would be shot down by a countryman behind a hedge; and to obtain truthful information was extremely difficult. The officer or orderly, carrying a report or an order, some-

times disappeared mysteriously ; a small party of soldiers would, perhaps, be surprised at night by a few inhabitants who had noted down their sleeping quarters." Under such circumstances, or when the enemy's cavalry are active and in possession of the country, a patrol will often be quite unable to carry on its mission, for, after two or three reports have been sent back, there will remain only the leader and his assistant scout. It cannot possibly be expected that these two will be able to go into villages and towns and ransack post and telegraph offices, etc., nor will they be able to maintain contact by night, for men and horses require rest and, during the period of rest, there will be none to continue observation of the enemy, and at the same time guard the exits and approaches of the bivouac. It will, therefore, be necessary, when patrols lose their penetrative power, are no longer able to safeguard themselves, and to continue observation and to submit reports, to send out reconnoitring troops or squadrons, or to support the patrols with contact troops or squadrons. Here we may pause to consider what the difference is between a reconnoitring squadron and a contact squadron. As a matter of fact there is no difference at all. A reconnoitring squadron is sent out to procure information when it is considered that patrols

would not have sufficient strength to act independently. A contact squadron is sent out when patrols already out have lost their reconnoitring power ; in both cases the squadron acts "as a patrol reserve, as a support to the patrols, and as a collecting station for information." To imagine that a contact squadron simply acts as reserve to the patrols it supports, and that the latter continue their independence would be absurd. It may of course occasionally occur that the G.O.C. desires that a particular patrol should remain independent for a particular mission ; but, if so, the fact must be notified in the orders to the squadron commander and to the patrol leader. Where this is not done all patrols which the squadron supports come under the commander's orders and he becomes the director and sends out such patrols as he may consider necessary.

"The independent cavalry may also be assigned special missions, such as raiding the enemy's communications, hampering his movements, or seizing important strategical points." (*Cav. Tr.*, p. 196). All these actions are for purely destructive purposes and hence are tactical. The destruction effected is often very temporary but the moral effect produced on the enemy very considerable. Cavalry is selected for such missions owing to its mobility and the

fact that in its search for information it constantly finds opportunities of inflicting considerable damage on the enemy. A body of cavalry may be despatched simply for the purpose of inflicting destruction at some point, if so it proceeds to carry out a tactical act. If this act be ordered in addition to that of procuring information the order issued to the commander of the detachment would run something as follows:—

Your object is :

(1) To obtain information as to the position of the hostile main body, etc.

(2) To cause such destruction to his communications as you may find possible.

In this case the importance of the two different tasks set is in the order stated. If the commander returns having effected both tasks he will have done very well indeed. If he has done the first and not the second he has still done very well ; but, if he has only carried out the second, he has done badly. It is most essential that this be persistently borne in mind, for too often have cavalry forgotten the primary object in pursuit of the secondary.

We have now to consider in what manner strategical cavalry should be directed in order to procure strategical information, and for this purpose it will be necessary to consider certain strategical terms. When an army takes the

field it must necessarily start from some point. Such point is called the base of operations. Here the army concentrates, and from here, as it advances, it maintains its strength by drawing supplies of men, horses, arms, accoutrements, food, etc.; to this point are sent back all the sick and wounded; and finally, in case of defeat, here it retreats. The lines of communications are the route, or routes, which connect the army with its base and along which the supplies, etc., above mentioned, are despatched to and fro. Along these lines will be formed defensive posts to hold the lines and to act as depôts for supplies, rest camps, etc. Should the army proceed to a great distance from its base, it will probably form an advanced base, auxiliary to the original and permanent one.

The base and lines of communications may be termed the heart and arteries of an army, for, as the heart supplies the life blood to the body and the arteries carry the blood to invigorate all parts of the body, so does the base supply material for the army and the lines of communications carry these forward to keep up its strength. The parallel is in every way complete, and it is of vital importance to an army that its base and lines of communications be preserved safe from attack or capture by the enemy.



The Theatre of Operations is a term applied to all that tract of country which an army may desire to attack or defend, and throughout this theatre will be scattered a number of strategical points the possession of which will be of advantage to one side and their loss a disadvantage to the other. Such points one will strive to gain and the other to retain. Important amongst such points will be the base of operations, lines of communications, arsenals, railway junctions, bridges, mountain passes, important towns which are centres of communications, strong natural positions which lie along routes by which armies can co-operate or communicate, and, finally, rich towns and districts where supplies can be obtained. To secure such strategical points as are of the first importance, to cover those in rear, also to be in the best position for seizing those which may be in advance, an army takes up what is called a "strategical front." The roads which an army takes in marching from its base to its strategical front and the roads taken from one strategical point to another are called "lines of operations," they are in fact lines of approach. No line of operation, no strategical point, is of any value unless it tends towards the destruction or preservation of an army or portion of an army, and unless such destruction or preservation has

a material effect upon the campaign. To ascertain how the enemy are distributed on their strategical front, where their main body and co-operating detachments are located, in what direction these are marching and in what strength will be the duty of the strategical cavalry.

There can be no normal order of march for a body of strategical cavalry, though to some extent a fan-shaped formation is essential. This is imposed by the fact that, at the outset, the information in regard to the enemy will be vague and their intentions still undeveloped. They may be concentrated at one point or they may not. Under any circumstances it will be necessary to prove not only that they are, but that they are not in certain places. The fan-shaped formation, however, refers more to the line of patrols and contact squadrons. As information will be required on a variety of points, so will patrols be directed in a variety of directions, each with its special mission. Some will be sent to locate the hostile main body, others to maintain touch with its detachments and to report if these show any intention of co-operating with the former. Important strategical points and routes must be watched to ascertain whether the enemy show any indication of occupying or utilising them. It will be necessary, too, to ascertain the distribution

of troops at the base and on the line of communications, to send patrols to intercept despatches by cutting or tapping telegraph wires, capturing despatch riders, mail trains, etc., etc.

In rear of the line of patrols and contact squadrons stronger supports will be necessary at certain points here and there but discrimination must be used as to when and where these are required. This is imperative in order that the main body shall be as strong as possible. Detachments are always a source of weakness and therefore must not be multiplied, and it will be well if, before sending one out, the commander asks himself whether its despatch is essential and whether, without it, he has sufficient strength in hand for all contingencies. Every detachment made presupposes a special mission for its commander and, though it is very rightly laid down in our regulations that detachments "rejoin on their own initiative the moment their task has been accomplished," still it would be unreasonable for a commander of the main body to conclude that simultaneously with the approach of battle all special missions will have been accomplished. If he is weak at the moment of collision the fault will be his own, even if he has been ill served by such detachments as could have rejoined. So far as the main body is concerned it should march as con-

centrated as possible, but this is not incompatible with a fairly broad front, provided such front is not extended beyond the limits which permit readiness to concentrate. The advantages of a broad front are many, it forms to some extent a vigilant screen, covers a number of approaches, additional support is given to the line of contact squadrons, while the wider range of country covered enables more topographical features to be utilised for signalling and tactical purposes, and in addition questions in regard to the subsistence, comfort and health of the troops are much simplified. To march on a narrow front, such as that entailed by a single road, is in reality no guarantee of ability to concentrate rapidly, as it takes just as long, and often much longer, to deploy from line of march than to close in from the flanks, for, apart from the length of the column, impedimenta and obstacles on the road have to be considered. In regard to the health and comfort of the troops there can be no question. Regiments and brigades, toiling one behind the other on a single road smothered in each others dust, occupying the same camping grounds in succession, the leading troops fouling the water supply for those behind them, etc., etc., will rapidly deteriorate in efficiency.

In its efforts to obtain information the

strategical cavalry is more or less bound to meet the hostile strategical cavalry, for it is highly improbable that each, intent on its own mission, will allow the other to slip past. In this manner will opportunities be found to establish that superiority so essential to the untrammelled search for information. Some of the best opportunities too for reconnaissance will occur when these combats are proceeding. It will then be possible, while the two main bodies are engrossed in tactical action, for small detachments to escape observation, slip past the enemy and carry out reconnaissance. To protect the army from such enterprises by the hostile cavalry, to ensure it against unforeseen contingencies and mishaps to its own strategical cavalry and to give the latter "complete liberty of action" is the duty of the protective cavalry. Liberty of action for the strategical cavalry is essential to enable the latter to proceed with its mission untrammelled by anxiety as to what may occur to the army during its absence. Protection is essential to the army itself—(1) To protect it from surprise; (2) To prevent hostile detachments from interfering with proposed action, and (3) to deny information as to proposed action. These three requirements are sometimes grouped under two heads, reconnaissance and screening, but there is no necessity



for this. Let it be sufficient to aim at reconnaissance carried out with enterprise for such will in itself do all the screening necessary. To be engrossed with the necessity for the latter has in the past too often checked that enterprise and offensive action which can alone lead to successful results. Far and away will it be more useful to maintain such contact with the hostile camps, that no patrol shall be able to leave them unobserved, to keep such a watch on the enemy's lines that they shall be forced to attend to their own protection and so be unable to attend to other matters. It is this system which our Field Service Regulations inculcate when they say "The protective cavalry best assures the safety of the force it covers by keeping the enemy continuously under observation when contact with him has once been gained." De Brack says that the object of light cavalry is "to shed light and protect the march of the army," and that it attains that object "by preceding our columns, feeling on the flanks, surrounding all with a vigilant and fearless curtain; following the enemy step by step, tormenting him, engendering uneasiness, discovering his projects, wearing out his forces in detail, and compelling him in short to waste in defence that offensive power from which he would otherwise have been able to derive the



greatest advantages." Von Schmidt supports this view by "The more the enemy sees himself surrounded by points and patrols only, which avoid him but constantly return again, and not by tangible bodies, the more certainly will every attempt he may make to break through be frustrated, and less will he be able to avoid perpetual observation and attain any information himself." It was this system which Ashby employed when, with a cavalry force far inferior to that of the enemy, he threw a screen round Stonewall Jackson's famous operations in the Shenandoah Valley. Day and night he harried the enemy and drove General Banks to despair. At one time the latter believed that Jackson had left the valley, at another he stood to arms to repel his attack when the attack was nothing but one of Ashby's onslaughts on his outpost line, and Jackson far away dealing deadly blows in a distant quarter. Then at the last, when his own time came to be dealt with, he refused to believe that Jackson, and not Ashby alone, was attacking him. Though it is of course of great value to deny information as to the strength of a force, still it is impracticable, having regard to more important matters, to form such a screen as will be impenetrable to spies, single scouts, or even small patrols. Where this is an absolute necessity it must be the work of the

outpost line supplied by the army. The essential point to aim at is to deny knowledge of plans and action. In regard to this the Duke of Wellington, talking about a certain spy, said "I never entertained a doubt that he was a double spy, I knew that he was in Soult's pay as well as mine, but I took care to let him know that I always had it in my power to test the intelligence he brought me, and he soon ceased to bring anything that was not true. The fact is that spies abound in every camp. I was aware of many in mine but as to hanging them that never entered into my head. If I could not manage at all times to render their tittle tattle worthless to the enemy I should have been unfit to command an army." The Emperor Napoleon went further in disregard of his strength being known to the enemy. On his second invasion of Italy an old spy presented himself to the Emperor (then First Consul). The man was, at that time, in the employ of Melas, the Austrian general and Napoleon's opponent, but excused himself for having gone over to the enemy and offered also to serve the Emperor and said "But I must report to my employer. You are sufficiently strong to communicate to me some true information which I may impart to him." . . . "As to that," said the Emperor, "it imports nothing though

the enemy, ignorant of my designs, knew my force and position, provided I know well his force and position. You shall be satisfied but attempt not to impose upon me. This thousand louis shall be forthcoming, but only after you have done me good service." Bourienne, who relates this story and was then the Emperor's secretary, then took down from the spy the names of the Austrian corps, their force, their position and the names of their generals. The Emperor then "marked with pins upon a map all the discoveries thus made, and, in return, ordered his chief of staff, General Berthier, to supply the spy with "a note pretty nearly accurate of" Napoleon's position, etc. The reward was paid after the battle of Marengo, when the information had been proved correct. The spy too received a handsome reward from Melas, who was also well satisfied with the information he received.

All possible approaches by which the army may advance towards the execution of its plans and by which the enemy may attempt to frustrate those plans, or carry their own into execution, must be closely watched, and all hostile movements checked or delayed. To watch means dispersion of force, while to check or delay means concentration of force. These two are to some extent incompatible with each

other but, as both are essential, the difficulty must be met by economising strength, by ceaseless activity and enterprise, by the use made of the natural features of the ground, and by a good system of intercommunication to ensure co-operation and concentration at vital points.

Time and space are essential in every military operation, whether it be for the troops to form up on their alarm posts, concentrate for battle, or perform a manœuvre. The protective cavalry must, therefore, be well to the front and flanks of the army it covers, that is on the most advanced defensive line compatible with its own safety. The space thus secured between it and the army is termed the protected area. On the march, "instead of marching at a uniform rate and distance in front of the main army," it should "advance rapidly from position to position." The manner of doing this will be to form the force into two portions, one a line of observation and reconnaissance and the other a line of resistance, exactly in the same way as the advanced guard is formed into a vanguard for reconnaissance and a main guard for fighting, for the protective cavalry is, after all, nothing but a strong and enterprising vanguard. The leading line will make rapid bursts from natural feature to natural feature, such as a ridge or river, and there establish posts of observation,

and despatch patrols to reconnoitre the enemy ; meanwhile the bulk of the force will march as concentrated as possible, ready to support the advanced line. When a large tract of country has to be protected it will be necessary to divide it up into sections, with suitable supports for each. In this case it will be necessary to have a general reserve to the whole and such reserve, when the force is weak, may be formed by mounted infantry. As the line of observation vacates a position and advances to make good another, the supports in rear will move up to that vacated. The great advantage of this system is that it inculcates enterprise, spares horseflesh and greatly facilitates observation, for more can be observed during periodical halts than when on the move. In addition it facilitates inter-communication between the different portions of the protective cavalry and the army it covers. This system is applicable to every reconnoitring detachment, even to a patrol. In the latter the scouts form the advanced reconnoitring line and the remainder of the patrol the support.

As the two armies close in towards each other and a battle becomes imminent the question will arise as to what use may be made of the strategical cavalry. It may either be despatched on a second strategical mission, or be



deputed to raid the enemy's communications, hamper his movements or seize important strategical points, or it may be retained to co-operate with the protective cavalry. Total destruction of the enemy cannot, as a rule, be attained by one battle, for battles are but the rungs of the ladder by which an army proceeds towards its object. While a battle is in progress, strategy does not sleep, but concerns itself with the means of producing the next battle. Inasmuch as when the battle takes place all available forces should be massed in order to gain the object of the battle, it will be advisable for the strategical cavalry to co-operate on the battlefield. Some portion of it must, however, continue to procure information for coming events. In the battle of Gaines Mill, General Lee's intention was to force General McClellan to withdraw from Richmond, and the attack was made in such a manner as to threaten the Federal line of communications. The Confederates succeeded in this attack and in both the objects for which it had been designed. Forced to abandon his line of communications, McClellan's army might have been destroyed by a second battle, had such battle been fought on ground arranged for by General Lee and not by General McClellan. The fault lay in the lack of strategical information and the misuse of



the Confederate cavalry. McClellan extricated himself from a difficult situation by a most hazardous operation, by which he changed his base of operations and consequently his line of communications. He thus assured his retreat by a route which General Lee had not arranged to intercept. The Confederate cavalry might have been more profitably used in obtaining information of the proposed change of base and intercepting the new line of retreat, than by use on the battlefield of Gaines Mill. This lack of strategical information had the unfortunate result of leading the Confederate cavalry on a raid along the abandoned line of communications, and not only was their action there of no value, but, when General Lee at last pursued the enemy, the Confederate cavalry were absent from the second battle.

When the enemy is within striking distance tactical reconnaissance will be required, both for offensive and defensive purposes, and it will be the duty of the protective cavalry to carry this out. In the case of attack it will be necessary in regard to the natural features and approaches to the hostile position and the distribution of troops on this position. In the case of defensive battle in regard to the strength of the enemy's forces and their lines of approach. By this time the protective cavalry may, or

may not, have been joined by the strategical cavalry, and the tactical reconnaissance may, or may not, be preceded by a cavalry combat. But, if the enemy's cavalry is still undefeated, or unless it has been despatched on some ill-advised mission, a cavalry combat is bound to take place, for the enemy will push his cavalry forward to cover his movements. It "must be attacked and driven back," and "reconnoitring parties will meanwhile be pushed forward to gain touch with the enemy's columns, locate his flanks and determine the position of his reserves."—(*Cav. Tr.*, p. 219). The information thus gained, supplemented by personal reconnaissance of the commander and his staff officers, will be the basis of the plan of attack. As in the case of strategical reconnaissance so in the case of tactical reconnaissance, the search for information does not end after the attack has been launched. Hostile counterstrokes, reinforcements, signs of retreat or arrangements for pursuit must be watched for and reported, for which purpose, during a battle, patrols must ever be hovering round the flanks and rear of the enemy.

In rear of the protective cavalry protection for the army on the march is afforded by advanced, flank and rear guards, and at rest by outposts. To assist these in carrying out their duties is the province of the Divisional Cavalry.

In Section 144, *Cavalry Training*, the duties of this cavalry are defined in two separate terms, thus:—(1) “for scouting in connection with the infantry advanced, rear or flank guards or outposts; or for intercommunication purposes” (page 193), and (2) “The Divisional cavalry assists the infantry in the immediate protection of the division by supplying mounted men for patrolling in connection with the advanced, flank, and rear guards and outposts; maintains connection with the protective cavalry; and furnishes escorts, orderlies, and despatch riders for the purpose of intercommunication generally.” (page 195).

It would be well if the first definition stood alone without being amplified by the second. So far as escorts go there can be no objection, if such escorts are tactical, such as would be the case in a convoy escort, nor can there be any objection to despatch riders, for these assist in carrying out intercommunication. There is, however, the gravest objection to the use of orderlies. The mass of the various staffs of an army is large and, once the system of permitting orderlies is allowed, there is no end to it. It is the most pernicious use to which a trooper may be put and such duties have a deleterious effect on the arm. The number of cavalry that can be spared from strategic and protective work can

never be large and, if properly used, a squadron should be quite sufficient for an infantry division, but to fritter away its strength in orderlies or duties of a similar nature is nothing more than waste of good material. The ill-effects of this misuse of cavalry have often been felt. Napier, in describing the battle of Fuentes Onoro, writes—"The combat was very unequal, for by an abuse too common, so many men had been drawn from the ranks as orderlies to general officers, and for other purposes, that not more than a thousand English troopers were in the field." General Gordon (Federal) excuses the lack of information, obtained by the Federal cavalry by stating that their strength was much reduced by orderly work and petty escort duties.

The importance of scouting with infantry advanced, flank and rear guards, or out-posts will not be disputed and the subject will be considered later. In regard to the use of divisional cavalry "for purposes of intercommunication" there is much to be said if such intercommunication is for tactical purposes. A review of the generality of battlefields will assuredly lead to the conclusion that much was lost owing to the lack of communication. Example after example can be adduced to support this view. In the battle of Bull Run, mentioned on page 39, the full results of victory were lost by suspending the counterstroke to be

given by the three reserve brigades, simply because Elzey's brigade on the left flank and Jones's on the right were mistaken for the enemy. Such a mistake would never have arisen had there been proper communication between these corps and headquarters. Much may undoubtedly be done in providing intercommunication by means of telephones, signalling, etc., but these can never entirely supersede the use of relay posts and despatch riders. Thus in a flat and even slightly wooded country visual signalling becomes impossible, and telephonic communication is out of the question with rapidly moving forces. As every battle resolves "itself into a series of distinct engagements, each raging round a different locality" it will be necessary for the subordinate commander of each such distinct engagement constantly to procure tactical information. Every infantry brigade should, for this purpose, have its own section of mounted infantry scouts, but so long as this is not the case such information must be supplied by the divisional cavalry. Prince Kraft relates in his "Letters on Cavalry" the important services the German divisional cavalry performed for their infantry on the battlefield, "I have already fully explained how useful to infantry in war, and even during a battle, are the cavalry specially attached to divisions, how no company likes to make a reconnaissance towards a farm, etc.,



without being accompanied by a couple of troopers as orderlies and patrols, and how, even in the middle of a battle, troopers are sent in all directions to obtain rapid information with regard to the ground, etc. I could give several examples; how even at the storming of a village (Le Bourget) mounted patrols are sent over the open country in front of the infantry, in order to see whether this or that part of the village was held by the enemy or not; and how by the use of single scouts, who galloped boldly over open ground which was swept by the enemy's very heavy infantry fire, the fire of the artillery and of the skirmishers could be used in combination at the proper moment with the best result." . . . "The patrols rode with the greatest audacity close up to villages which were to be stormed, and brought back tidings as to whether and how the enemy had occupied them." . . . "When the struggle is raging hotly along the whole line it often happens that one or two individual horsemen will quite escape notice, since all attention is directed towards the enemy's masses." . . . "I could relate many cases, which have been told me, in which single horsemen have watched the enemy from the very shortest distances without attracting his attention; and the hotter the fight the easier was this to do."



### CHAPTER III.

#### ORDER OF BATTLE, CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMANDERS, SPIES, HOSTILE PLANS, INDICATIONS.

THE efficient performance of reconnaissance duties in the field is dependent on the manner in which the Intelligence Branch of the War Office has, during peace, (1) collected, compiled and prepared for distribution, on the outbreak of war, all available information in regard to the enemy's strength, his country and his resources, and (2) the arrangements it has made to continue the supply of information during the war. With few exceptions, such as certain secret documents, relating to mobilization plans, the defences of its fortresses, etc., and possibly certain new articles of equipment, no nation can, during peace, completely conceal its strength, and much which it endeavours to conceal may be purchased by the judicious use of secret service money. There will thus be little difficulty in accumulating information prior to the outbreak of war. After the declaration of

war difficulties will begin to present themselves, but these will not be insurmountable if sufficient foresight has been used in dotting the enemy's country with intelligence agents and arranging with them the means of transmitting their information. It will be rare indeed, whatever the character of the war, if such agents cannot be found, for every nation contains a large element of foreigners in its population and some of these may from friendly motives, others from greed, be induced to become agents, whilst among the hostile population itself a Judas may now and again be found. The more accurate the information compiled during peace, the more perfect the arrangements for adding to it on and after the outbreak of war, the easier will it be to direct reconnaissance in the field. The former gives the latter a working basis and supplements it during war.

Information is both positive and negative ; by the former is meant information that the enemy is in a certain place, and by the latter that he is not there : this is the "Line Clear" of any projected operation and tells the commander that he can go ahead and have no anxiety of any outside interference. Working forward and outward till the enemy's strategical or tactical front is reached, patrols sent to search places where the enemy is believed, and also where he

is not believed, to be, will, finally, by process of elimination, locate the flanks of his position and this, after the front has been located, is the next great point to achieve. Not until then will it be possible to wrest from him his secrets by working inward towards his main body, round his rear towards his reserves, lines of communications and line of retreat. Negative information is also of great value in corroborating positive information. Thus, a commander may be in occupation of an extensive position approachable by two or more routes. Until he knows by which route the enemy is advancing he will be quite unable to form his plans. He must, therefore, send out reconnaissances on all the routes. If he receives positive information that the enemy is advancing by one route, and negative information that he is not utilizing the other routes, he can mass his troops on that part of the position commanding the route taken. Even while a battle is in progress a commander may well remain anxious as to the arrival of hostile reinforcements, or attempts to turn his flanks and rear. His anxiety will be relieved if he has taken the precaution to surround himself with protective patrols and the enemy with reconnoitring patrols, the former to tell him that no attempts are being taken to disturb his arrangements, and the latter to con-

tinue the supply of information. Such patrols may incidentally be of great value in preventing those unfortunate mishaps, which so frequently occur, of co-operating bodies being mistaken for the enemy.

In regard to positive information the first great point is to ascertain what is termed the enemy's "Order of Battle." This means a statement showing the details of strength and the formation of the army into army corps, divisions and brigades, with the various auxiliary services such as supply, transport, ordnance, trains, etc. To carry out this, the initial stage of all reconnaissance, is the duty of the Intelligence Branch. The first sources of information open to this department are the published records of the hostile army, such as the army list, the equipment and organization tables, etc., which give the names and numbers of all corps, their location during peace, their peace and war strength, the organization of army corps, divisions, brigades, etc. The details of the various reserves available, will be found in other documents readily procurable. All this information is available during peace and hence it is possible to ascertain with tolerable accuracy the armed strength of the enemy. The next point to ascertain is how the enemy proposes to utilize his forces for the prosecution of the war.

If secret service money can procure the enemy's mobilization plans it will be a simple matter to draw up the "order of battle" with which the enemy proposes to attack or to defend himself. If it is impossible to obtain this valuable information then recourse must be had to other means, such as the intelligence agents already mentioned, newspaper reports, etc. The former will be able to report the movements of troops, the latter will periodically divulge important secrets, such as the appointment of a certain general to a certain command, the concentration of that command at a certain place, while the account of a review may give details of the troops composing that command. Thus, in various ways, it will be possible to track regiments from their garrisons to their brigades, and so on, till finally, the order of battle assumes a fairly complete form. The data so arrived at will not, however, remain constant but will be liable to fluctuation as the campaign progresses. Casualties will necessitate reserves, not originally included, being called up, regiments may be relieved from service and, periodically, a total reorganization may take place. Thus, in place of two army corps, three may be formed, an independent division may be created, etc. All these changes must be noted as they occur, and a fresh order of battle drawn up.

The next point to discover will be the location of the hostile army in the theatre of war. Its initial location will have been ascertained during the endeavours made to draw up the order of battle. As the army advances to carry out its plan this initial, or preparatory, distribution of forces, will alter from day to day. A portion of the forces will be left to guard the base, detachments will be left to defend the lines of communications, or sent to seize important strategical points, or operate independently in distant districts, while, for the sake of supplies, the main army will split up into two or more columns, each proceeding by a separate route. The task of the cavalry in collecting this information during war will be materially assisted if it is supplied by the Intelligence Branch with a handbook showing the initial order of battle and the distribution of forces, and it will not rest from its labours till it has been able to account for every single regiment mentioned in the order of battle.

But before a regiment can be definitely located it must be identified, and to assist in the identification of regiments, brigades, etc., the handbook should contain illustrations of uniforms, equipment, etc., and remarks on any little peculiarities of carrying or wearing uniform or equipment. Thus, during the Tirah Ex-



pedition in 1897, the "Queens" were the only regiment which had their rifle slings rolled up in a coil and hanging from the upper bands of their rifles. After the expedition some Afridis mentioned this regiment as one of the best we had. They knew the regiment well, and, no doubt, soon learnt to pay respect to the men whom they saw coming along with their slings rolled up near the fore band. Many little similar peculiarities will, from time to time, come to light during the campaign and all should be noted as addenda to the handbook, and such information should be dispersed throughout the army. At the storming of the Heights of Abraham, Quebec, our troops had to cross the river at night in boats and drift downstream to the landing place. A French sentry on the far bank, hearing the boats, challenged, on which one of the officers, who spoke French, at once replied, "France." The sentry then demanded the name of the regiment and the reply went back, "De La Reine," for the officer knew that this regiment formed part of the garrison. Had he been unable to return such a satisfactory reply the whole operation might have failed, for the sentry would have fired his musket and so raised an alarm.

While the battle of Waterloo was in progress, a French officer, who was out foraging, came

across some Prussians, also foraging. Realizing the importance of having seen Prussians, he galloped back and was at once taken before the Emperor Napoleon, who treated the information as absurd. "The Prussians," he said, "are far from here." Indignant at not being believed, the officer collected a few men and, riding back, captured three Prussians and took them to the Emperor, who, having questioned them, ascertained their regiments and, aware of the order of battle of the Prussian army, knew at once the brigade and division to which that regiment belonged and, consequently, that Blucher's army, which he believed was being pursued by Marshal Grouchy, was, on the contrary, in full march to reinforce the English. These two are actual cases and it is not difficult to imagine many others when to know the hostile order of battle and to be able to identify regiments may be of vital importance. Thus, if we know that the 3rd brigade of the enemy holding a certain position consists of the 28th, 54th and 60th regiments of infantry, No. 2 battery of field artillery and one squadron of 6th Hussars, and that a convoy escorted by half the 60th regiment, two guns and a squadron of 6th Hussars has been seen at a point about five miles away from the enemy's camp and moving away from it, we know at once that the strength

of that brigade has been reduced by the amount of the escort to the convoy, and that the moment for attack is favourable. If again, prior to the attack, reconnaissance establishes the fact that the half battalion 60th left in camp holds the right of the hostile position we realize that, so far as numbers go, this is the weak point of the position. Or again, suppose a forced march has been made with a view to attacking the 3rd brigade in its isolated position and that, on arrival, we can clearly distinguish by glasses, or learn by reconnaissance, that the 48th regiment, which forms part of the 4th hostile brigade, located at a point some twenty miles distant from the 3rd brigade, has joined the latter, we at once know that the 3rd brigade has been reinforced by the 4th and that the enemy we proposed to attack has probably been warned of the impending attack. This last inference, too, admits of another also very important inference, in that the need of reinforcements shows that, for some reason or other, the enemy believed that the 3rd brigade was not strong enough to sustain the attack by itself. What these reasons are we cannot say, possibly want of ammunition, possibly reduction in strength, owing to detachments, sickness, etc.; anyhow, we are justified in hoping that, notwithstanding the arrival of reinforcements,

there are possibly some compensating advantages. Of course it would be foolish to jump to any such conclusions and to act precipitately on them, but they will assist in preventing a gloomy view of a changed situation.

Next to the enemy's Order of Battle and location of his forces it will be necessary to know the plans of the hostile commanders. These may often be gauged by the disposition of the forces, and by a variety of indications to be considered later, but a valuable clue as to what the enemy may do, under certain circumstances, may often be obtained by a knowledge of the military careers, and physical and mental characteristics of the commanders. Another useful branch of information, therefore, to be recorded in the handbook would be a short biographical record of the principal hostile commanders. So important did the Emperor Napoleon consider this that he had biographies written of the hostile commanders, and when his baggage fell into the hands of the Russians, during the retreat from Moscow, these biographies were found in his field library. With some commanders every conceivable form of liberty may be taken, with others even the slightest risk will be hazardous. This knowledge has played a most important part in campaigns. During the seven days fighting round

Richmond, in 1862, General Lee so thoroughly knew the characteristics of his opponent, General McClellan, that he was practically able to denude Richmond of troops and carry his army across the Chickahominy river into a difficult and wooded country and attack one of McClellan's isolated wings. By doing so he laid Richmond bare and open to capture, the result of which could not have failed to be disastrous to the Confederates, for they would have been cut off from their supplies, etc., and their loss in morale would have been incalculable. Lee, however, knew his adversary would never dream of such a counterstroke. He was right, McClellan simply could not attack, it was not in his nature to be aggressive.

One great point to note with reference to the above information in regard to regimental uniforms, war services, and characteristics of officers is that its possession affords a means by which the information of spies and deserters can be tested. Thus the spy should be asked to describe some uniform, or the characteristics of some officer described in the handbook; if he states these correctly, then the chances are the rest of his story is correct. What the Duke of Wellington meant when he said that he always had it in his power to test the truth of what a spy told him we do not know, but we know that



he was well served in regard to information as to the enemy's Order of Battle. Of Colonel Colquhoun Grant, one of his famous exploring officers, it is related "In collecting accurate information of the French army, as he informed me, and as was well known to Lord Wellington, he was occasionally in their rear; where he obtained exact intelligence, not only of their number and equipment, but of the description of their troops, the manner in which their cavalry was mounted, the number and equipment of their guns, the state of their supplies, etc. He was acquainted not only with the character of each superior officer, but with that of each commandant of battalion." On occasions Grant lived for some few days, and always in uniform, in the enemy's camp. He was, at last, taken prisoner but managed to escape and made his way to Paris. Here he attended reviews and in other ways obtained information regarding reinforcements sent to Portugal, which he managed to convey to the Duke of Wellington.

Grant no doubt owed much of his success to his intimate knowledge of French and Spanish, and to his ability to pass himself off as a Spaniard, but his chief quality lay in his courage and resource. He was no mere spy who carried out his mission in disguise but a perfect specimen of the scout in uniform. Even when in



the midst of the French camps he always wore uniform and has thus proved that, given the necessary courage and resource, it is possible for a scout in uniform not only to ride in the rear of the enemy but to reside in his camps. The means and expedients by which the necessary information may be gained are various and will commend themselves to the keen scout as occasion arises. A stroke of luck may at times give the desired information ; thus, after the battle of Vimiero, the French order of battle was found from which the details, with strength, of Marshal Junot's force were ascertained. General Lee's plan for the invasion of Maryland and the Gettysburg campaign was found by the Federals wrapped round some cigars. To trust to luck alone will be of little use, we must force it to come by the careful examination of any papers that may be found in camps and other places, and it will be rare indeed that these do not give some useful information, even envelopes will tell what regiments and brigades were in the camp. Every post, telegraph and newspaper office passed should be visited. The cross-examination of prisoners and deserters, inspection of their uniforms, also that of the killed and wounded, will all assist in accumulating information. A curious case occurred, in the Franco-German war, when a squadron of

the 8th Uhlans charged two French squadrons who refused to meet them, the sole result of the affair being the capture of a dog, who bore on his collar the name of his master, an officer in the 10th Dragoons. It was thus discovered that these squadrons belonged to that unit. The capture of despatch riders has, time after time, proved a most useful source of information. In December, 1908, Sir John Moore, while advancing towards Madrid to co-operate with the Spanish army, learnt from a captured despatch that the Emperor Napoleon had retaken Madrid. The despatch had been entrusted to a French officer who, travelling without an escort, arrived at a village where he so insulted the postmaster that a tumult arose in which he was murdered. Captain Waters, a scout and the counterpart of Grant, happening to be at the village when this occurred, purchased the despatch for twenty dollars; it was from the Emperor Napoleon to Marshal Soult and gave full details of the French dispositions and plans. While the Duke of Wellington was at Torres Vedras several French despatches were intercepted and among them one very remarkable one from the Emperor to Marshal Massena, from which it was seen that the Emperor had the most perfect knowledge of the strength and dispositions of the English army, even of the very intention of

the government itself. His sources of information too were stated and it was found that the English newspapers were of much assistance to him from their indiscreet writings. While besieging Badajos another despatch from Marshal Marmont was intercepted, which explained minutely his plans, his strength, dispositions, sources of supply, and his troubles and difficulties.

Spies may at times be useful to the strategical cavalry and the commander of a reconnoitring detachment should be well supplied with secret service money for paying these gentlemen. Grant stated that "his best, and indeed his only spies, were men who acted from patriotism, and would not accept money." A peculiar talent is required to discover such men, and they are the product of only special forms of war. Spies from a hostile population are less trustworthy; they are, from the nature of their occupation, treacherous, but it may, at times, be possible to obtain fairly reliable information from men whose lives and property have been placed under safeguards. A guitar player, named Fuentes, repeatedly went to Madrid for the Duke of Wellington and brought in valuable information. Perhaps the most remarkable case of all was a cobbler, who had a hut at one end of the bridge over the river Irun, on the French

line of communications. This man plied his trade by the side of the bridge for years and none suspected that he was one of the Duke's most trusted and faithful spies, and that he took note of every single French soldier who moved in or out of Spain by this route. His information was conveyed to the Duke by a man named Stuart, who kept a few light vessels which plied up and down the coast. Spies should always be paid by results and the reward should be liberal. Deserters seldom know much about the troops, etc., with which they have been serving, but careful questioning may at times procure some useful items. A deserter brimful of news should be suspected of having been sent in to give false information. Marshal Marbot relates a story of how an Englishman once entered the French camp in 1811. This man, one of the Duke's scouts dressed in the uniform of an English Cavalry officer, and bearing in his pocket a commission as such, coolly walked one morning into the French camp and leisurely began to examine everything. Being arrested he was taken to General Massena, to whom he declared that he had, owing to disgust at being superseded, deserted, and was quite willing to give all the information in his power as to the situation of the English army. His story was believed and Massena spent several

days with him studying maps and concerting plans. There were, however, certain French officers in camp who mistrusted him, for they believed they recognized a spy who had played this game before. Finding himself suspected, he suddenly decamped and reached the English lines safely, taking with him Massena's notebook containing valuable data. Unfortunately, the name of this brave man is lost, but Marbot states that he was simply the captain of a small smuggling vessel. One would think that a glance at the hands of one who was a rough seafaring man, would have shown that he most certainly could not have been what he said—a captain in a cavalry regiment, besides the carrying of a commission should have been enough to warrant suspicions.

The plans of the enemy may also be learnt from "indications." Grant again gives us a good example of this. Sent by the Duke to obtain information of Marshal Marmont's designs, he passed the river Tormes in the night and, entering the French camp, remained there three days and ascertained that means to storm Ciudad Rodrigo had been prepared, both as regards supplies and scaling ladders. He accordingly sent back word to the Duke by means of friendly Spaniards. Not feeling very sure, however, that the French really intended



to storm that fortress, he took post on the French line of march and "noting every battalion and gun, and finding all moved towards Rodrigo, he turned back and, entering their abandoned camp at Tamanes, found all the scaling ladders had been left behind and thus ascertained that Marmont's intentions were not real. In 1862, the Confederates made a sortie from Fort Donaldson and the Federals fell back in disorder. Some Confederates were taken prisoners, and on being searched, it was found that each had three days' rations in his haversack. When this was reported to General Grant, the Federal commander, he said "Then they meant to cut their way out and not to fight; whichever party first attacks will now win." When General Spencer was in front of Almeida a large body of French were seen drawn up in line. It was for some time thought that the garrison at Almeida had been reinforced by Marshal Marmont, who it was known was marching to their relief. General Spencer hesitated to attack but Colonel Waters, riding forward to reconnoitre, returned with the information that the enemy were not advancing and that they were too clean and well dressed to have come off a long march, and must, therefore, be a part of the garrison only. This deduction proved to be correct, for the garrison had only moved out to



make a demonstration to cover Marmont's march through the mountains.

The enemy may either advance, halt or retreat, and each of these acts has its own especial indication from which the intention can be inferred, but, as De Brack says, inferences can only be drawn by "A knowledge of the general customs of war, and the peculiarities of the enemy. It can be done only by practising constantly the closest observation." The general improvement of roads, exits from camps, the collection of supplies, bridge building operations, such as the collection of timber and boats, the collection of railway stock and transport, marking out of fords, all indicate an advance. Tracks show the route taken and the wheel, hoof and foot marks the composition of the force; it may even be possible by an inspection of the bivouac to compute the number of men, and the number of horses from the horse standings. The collection of very large quantities of supplies, pitching of tents, building shelters, levelling ground, making camp streets wider than usual, construction of field defences, unloading of supplies, etc., signify a prolonged stay, while loading up of carts and striking of tents over night pronounce an early start. Especial attention must be paid to anticipating a retreat in order that it may be arrested as

soon as possible. Baggage and other impedimenta sent back, bridges prepared for demolition and trees to be felled, lighting an inordinate amount of bivouac fires, the burning of stores, explosion of ammunition, preparation of positions in rear, early withdrawal of artillery, relief of infantry by cavalry, all help to divine the enemy's plans. If the lines of communication in rear show signs of depôts being abandoned, stores destroyed or taken away, it may be inferred that the enemy are seeking a new line of communications.

It is important at all times to note the condition and morale of the troops. If elated and of good morale they may be trusted to fight well, if depressed the contrary may be assumed. Signs of bad condition and morale are : readiness to surrender, carelessness in reconnaissance and protective duties, straggling on the line of march, abandoned arms and equipment, dead horses and transport animals lying about, laden ambulances, the number and condition of the graves and the general appearance of deserted camps.

A distant enemy may be located on the march by clouds of dust, glint of arms, and at the halt in camp by the hovering of carrion birds and bivouac fires. Dust raised by infantry is low and dense, by cavalry high with ragged edges,

by artillery and vehicles of varying height and disconnected.

Reinforcements may be inferred by the sight of fresh uniforms, by the increased size of camps and stacks of supplies, and by cheering and the sound of bands.

An early attack means a determined attempt to force a battle, while a late attack may mean either the intention of covering a retreat or obtaining a forward position for an attack the next day, or possibly a night attack. Ostentatious display of force not followed up by an attack often covers a design to attack in some other quarter. A show of attack, followed up by a sudden retreat, indicates an ambush, or an intention to lure away in a false direction. Troops massed at a particular point mark that point as the key of the defensive position, or the direction from which a counterstroke or attack will take place. Conspicuous trenches and field works are often false positions.

These are some of the general indications, but care must always be taken not to be misled by them. The lighting of camp fires is a favourite form of deception; if they are lighted in regular succession and then quickly die out they are to mislead. Troops are often marched out of camp and secretly brought back, with bands playing to pretend that reinforcements

have arrived. False despatches, etc., are purposely left lying about. At the second battle of Bull Run, Stuart dragged brushwood up and down the roads beyond Porter's flank; the latter believed that the dust was raised by troops working round his flank, and so stood for some hours waiting the attack which never came. The consequence was that his corps took no part in the battle that day. When Lord Moira landed at Ostend, in 1703, with an army to reinforce the Duke of York, he saw from the position of the French army that he must at once reembark or make a most hazardous march in front of the enemy. He chose the latter risk and succeeded by stratagem. Well aware that the country people were in the interest of the French and that his every move would be reported, he set to work to make them carry false intelligence. Staff officers were sent ahead of the column to select camps and requisition supplies, but Lord Moira, avoiding the routes so indicated, marched secretly in a contrary direction.

## CHAPTER IV.

### TOPOGRAPHICAL RECONNAISSANCE, RAPID SKETCHING.

IN considering the information required about the resources of a country and its topographical features a distinction should be made as to how far the procuring of this information is a cavalry duty and how far it is not. The resources of a country may be classed roughly under the following heads :—

(1) Those which affect the subsistence, health and comfort of man and beast, such as supplies of provisions, fodder, accommodation.

(2) Those which add to the fighting strength of an army, such as warlike stores and materials, etc.

(3) Those which affect the movement of troops, such as transport by road, rail or water.

To utilize cavalry primarily for the purpose of procuring information on these heads appears to be a waste of strength and very much akin to the misuse of divisional cavalry. The duty should be delegated to officers of the medical,

supply and ordnance departments, who may, for this purpose, accompany reconnoitring detachments. When such officers are not available, cavalry may be called on to assist in this matter. There is no intention of minimising the value of such information, for it is admittedly highly important for a commander to know how far he can rely on the resources of a country, and how far he must encumber himself with the carriage of stores, etc. The fact, however, has to be emphasized that cavalry work in regard to strategical and protective duties is sufficiently harassing, especially with reference to horse-flesh, so that, when avoidable, cavalry should not be called on to do what is manifestly, on most occasions, the duty of specially organized departments. When not required for purely cavalry duties this arm may well demand its well earned rest. We need not then lay undue stress on the necessity of cavalry officers and men learning such formulæ as how to compute the contents of a haystack, the capacity of a well, etc., or as to how many blacksmiths, shoemakers, bakers, cows, pigs, sheep, poultry, carts, horses, etc., a village or town may be able to supply.

So far as questions of supply, etc., concern the enemy, it is highly important that information be procured by reconnoitring detachments ;



thus a commander, informed that the enemy are destitute of supplies, may decide to avoid an engagement and let hunger produce the result, which might otherwise cost a number of lives. In the case of the Black Prince, at Poitiers, (see page 13) had the French king known the destitution of the English and avoided a battle, he would, in all probability, have, in a few days, forced the Prince to surrender unconditionally, or to attack at a great disadvantage. Similarly, should a case occur of a breakdown in the enemy's transport arrangements, or it be known that disease is rife among the transport animals, it might on occasions be advisable to adopt a policy of "wait and see."

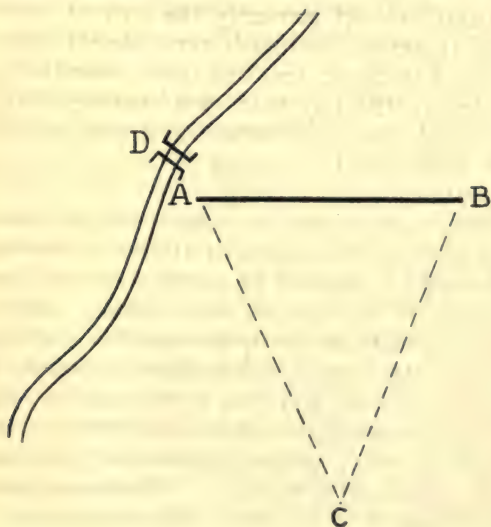
Concerning the topographical features of the country, the case is far different, but here again cavalry should not be called upon for those duties which can be far more efficiently performed by engineer and pioneer officers, such as furnishing road, railway and river reports. The whole point of cavalry reconnaissance is that the information procured should reach the commander in ample time for action to be taken on it. Elaborate reports and sketches are out of place, as they require too much time and consequently are apt to arrive too late. Reports should be simple yet concise, capable of rapid execution and transmission and deal principally

with tactical features and as to how such obstacles as rivers, ravines, marshy ground, etc., can be crossed or avoided. The principle, too, of mutual co-operation makes it incumbent on every reconnoitring detachment to keep its eyes open and, if it notices anything which may affect the marching, comfort or health of the troops, to report accordingly. A certain amount of training in appreciating what should and should not be reported is, therefore necessary. All that it is desired to point out is that these matters are not primarily the duty of cavalry and, therefore, too much time should not be devoted to them; that this is too often the case is due to the fact that such training is comparatively an easy matter, as it does not need the difficulty of assuming an enemy in peace operations.

The main points on which cavalry reconnaissance, as to topographical details, should be directed are summed up in the following paragraph. "The country, as a whole, must be reconnoitred sufficiently far ahead to enable the commander to turn its features to account in his plan of action, and also to prevent him from engaging on unfavourable ground." (*Cav. Tr.*) We have two points to consider, *viz.*, favourable and unfavourable features. The former assist, the latter mar a plan. Reconnaissance of

ground is, therefore essential before a plan of attack can be evolved, and it is similarly necessary before a defensive position can be taken up.

The topographical details to be taken into consideration in regard to a battlefield are— (1) approaches and exits, (2) cover, and (3) localities. A line of approach may be decided by the object in view, or it may itself influence the latter. This will be understood from the following diagram :—



The enemy hold the position A—B, their line of retreat being by the bridge at D. A force, advancing from C, has two lines of approach, viz., C—A and C—B, one against either flank of the position. The best course of action on the part of the force at C would be to endeavour to cut off the retreat of the enemy by the bridge at D, and force them to take a direction in prolongation of C—B, and so to fight a second battle at a greater disadvantage and with but little hope of retreat; but the approach by A—C may be totally unsuitable, owing to the absence of cover and positions for the attack, while that by C—B may be in every way favourable. Circumstances in this case will force the attack to proceed *via* C—B, and, consequently to aim for a lesser object.

Apart from the question of the best line of approach, so far as the object to be attained goes, an approach is easy or difficult according to whether it opposes an obstacle or not, the same applies to exits. Obstacles delay a movement but, when foreseen, arrangements may be made to overcome or avoid them, otherwise, if suddenly encountered, they cause disorder and, if this occurs under hostile fire, the consequences may be serious. They are particularly adverse to the attack, whether this be directed against the defence, or by the latter as a counter stroke

against the attack. Undue stress must, however, never be laid on an obstacle being impassable, or insurmountable: many a morass has been crossed, many a precipice scaled secretly and silently. So called impregnable positions seldom exist: they have too often been scaled and the defenders surprised. A story is related of a major who, sent by Lord Cornwallis to capture a hill fort in Mysore, was told on arrival by his engineer officer, who had reconnoitred it, that it was impossible to storm with the means at disposal. "Impossible, Sir," replied the major, "Why, d—— it all, I have the order in my pocket." On the other hand, no obstacle should be minimised, for even the most ridiculous little ditch may throw a charge of cavalry in disorder, if suddenly encountered, without previous warning of its presence.

Cover may conceal from view, in which case it is often valuable for purposes of concealment and surprise, but, if commanded by and penetrable to fire, it becomes a dangerous trap. When cover of the latter description exists in front of a position it may be accepted that the defenders have carefully taken its range. A case occurred during the Russo-Japanese war of the attackers crowding behind corn sheaves, which became so many death traps. Cover which, in addition to concealment, gives protec-

tion from fire is valuable, both for the attack and the defence. Outside the position it cannot be too distant for the defence, or too close to it for the attack. *A long field of fire is necessary for the defence and a short one for the attack*; this teaches us that, within certain limits, the country can hardly be too close or difficult for the attack, or too open for the defence. This is not sufficiently realised, and many a commander will take a wide circuit to find open ground for his attack, in preference to making it over difficult and enclosed country; the physical difficulties daunt him, but he thereby gives the enemy the long field of fire and refuses the advantages of the short one for himself. A field of fire depends on the absence of cover, and where there is cover, impenetrable to and uncommanded by fire, there is dead ground. The latter is found mostly on hillsides and mountains. The chances then of success in difficult country are all in favour of the attack, for the advance can be made to decisive ranges without heavy loss, opportunities too will occur, where dead ground exists, of resting and reforming from time to time, of rallying, of bringing up ammunition and of concealing designs. We learn then not to lay too much stress on attacking over difficult ground; the lesson has been proved, time after time, by success against



positions in hills, etc., and by repulse against those in the open.

Localities, such as hills, woods, villages, homesteads, sunken roads, etc., are really a superior form of cover, and are utilised for a variety of purposes. In the defence they embrace the position itself, strengthen, support and connect its various parts; when outside the position to the front they are a source of danger, if too close, but often of use when distant, in order to force a premature deployment of the attack. In the latter case, the withdrawal must be timely to prevent the detaining force being cut off. In rear of a position they form rallying points, but should, in this case, be close up and command the first position; if commanded, they become traps as soon as the attack has gained the vacated position; if distant, they may cause a premature retirement to avoid coming under fire *en route*. In the case of the attack they serve as points to drive it forward, each locality being occupied with the object of mastering another in advance, and so progressing forward, from objective to objective; at one time they may be used to push home a frontal attack, at another to bring enfilade fire to bear on a locality held by the enemy, sometimes as pivots of manœuvre to be held by one portion of a force, while another

portion directs its attack in a different quarter.

It is unnecessary to go into details as to the various items of information required for reports, as these are so fully given in a large number of handbooks. The point to be considered is chiefly how reports can be rapidly executed. It is necessary, in the first place, to be able to appreciate the importance of topographical details, and to realise how each feature can be turned to account or avoided, and then to be able to furnish a timely report and sketch. This leads us to the question of military sketching.

A knowledge of map reading and map making is of great value. The former enables an individual to find his way about. Every scout or despatch rider should be able to make a rough tracing of the route he is to traverse, and to depict on it any alterations he may find due to realignment of roads, etc. He should be able to correct mistakes in the original map, and note any landmarks which may be of use for future guidance. Instruction in sketching with a view to supplement a report has a marked effect in training the eye for country. To make an accurate map, or rather sketch, requires not only special aptitude but a fairly long course of training, and the use of a variety of instruments, which are not easily carried, and are apt to be mislaid. Men, with an

aptitude for sketching, may be specially trained, but even the ordinary individual can be taught to produce a rough yet useful sketch. For such a person the instruction should be limited to the drawing of conventional signs, the enlargement of maps, the knowledge, not so much as how to make a scale, as how to use one, or to make a rough and ready one by means of folded paper. Far and away the best plan for enlarging maps is to use a pantograph, which is easily manipulated, and one, costing four to five shillings, is capable of making large and accurate enlargements. Equipped with such knowledge, which should be within the capacity of every individual, the next step would be to learn how to correct such enlargements and fill in tactical details. Constant practice in enlarging and filling in details will produce the ability to make fairly accurate though rough eye sketches. If a rapid reconnaissance be required of a zone of country, the enlargement may be cut up into strips and a strip, covering about one, two or more miles, given to each reconnoitrer, who would move rapidly forward, filling in details as he advanced. On the completion of the reconnaissance the strips would be pasted or pinned together, and the map reconstructed. In the case of a long reconnaissance each reconnoitrer, as he completes three to four miles of sketch,

would cut off such portion of the strip as he has completed and send it back to the commander, who would thus be in constant receipt of information as to the country in front. This is particularly useful for road reports. Care must be taken that each strip is numbered with a serial number, showing its position on the original map, and a letter, showing its connection with the strips already transmitted. Where obstacles exist, it should be noted how they can be best crossed or avoided, thus at one point a ravine may be crossed in single file at a walk only, at another point, where the banks are low, the whole regiment may cross in line at a walk, at another point it may trot through in sections, etc., etc. In regard to cover the number of troops it can conceal or protect should be stated, thus in one depression a regiment may stand in mass, in another in line, etc. The system above mentioned was taught by General Haig, when I.G.C. in India, and it only wants a trial to show how rapidly it can be executed, certainly at a steady trot, if not a gallop, with a few halts now and then to fill in details. Stress must be laid on the fact that a sketch should, under no circumstances, contain any imaginary information, as the consequences of this might be very fatal if any plan is based on it.

Information, in regard to obstacles on the actual battle field, must be provided by ground scouts, and it is the duty of every squadron, whether orders are issued or not, to send these out. Many are the instances of cavalry neglecting this form of reconnaissance and falling headlong into ravines, while making a charge. Some of these have been depicted in pictures, such as the charge of the Cuirassiers at Ohain. Here we can, on canvas, see the ghastly spectacle of a body of cavalry, through their own neglect, rushing on to a state of destruction which nothing that an enemy could do would produce. The ravine is full of a mass of horses and troopers, plunging, kicking and struggling in every direction, while on the brink of the ravine are seen a line of disordered horsemen, striving in vain to restrain their maddened horses from taking the dangerous leap. Very much the same occurred to the English cavalry at the battle of Talavera, where long, waving grass concealed a ravine. On the far side of this ravine the French infantry were formed in square, and against them was sent Anson's cavalry brigade. Riding knee to knee, the line steadily increased its speed till within about 150 yards of the square, when the speed became headlong, just as the men reached the brink of the deadly trap concealed among the grass.



The first to see the danger was the Colonel of the 23rd Dragoons, whose horse, however, managed to clear the ravine at a bound. Wheeling round Colonel Elley endeavoured to halt his men, but it was too late. "Some of the troopers cleared the obstacle in their stride; some swerved in time and refused to take the leap; others scrambled into and over the less difficult points of the ditch; but many fell, horse and man, into the trap, and were crushed by the rear rank falling on top of them. There were several broken necks, and scores of broken arms and legs in the leading squadrons. The second line got warning of the obstacle by seeing the inexplicable disorder into which their fellows had fallen. They slackened their pace, but were borne into the mass at the ravine, before they could entirely bring themselves to a stand."



## CHAPTER V.

### ACTION OF PATROLS AND OTHER RECON- NOITRING DETACHMENTS.

RECONNAISSANCE is both offensive and defensive. It is offensive in the case of strategical cavalry and all detachments whose mission it is to search for and gain touch with the enemy. It is defensive in the case of the protective cavalry and all detachments for local protection, such as advanced guards, rear and flank guards and outposts. Since protection is, however, essential for every detachment, no matter what its mission, and since early information is the surest safeguard and road to success, so a combination of offensive and defensive reconnaissance must always be utilized. Thus strategical cavalry, while carrying out offensive reconnaissance, will also protect itself by defensive reconnaissance in the form of advanced guards, etc., and these, in their turn, must adopt offensive reconnaissance, for to be forewarned is to be forearmed.

Patrols are utilized for a variety of purposes, from obtaining strategical information to maintaining communication between the piquets of an outpost line. To invent a number of names suitable to each form of patrol would be to multiply such names without any corresponding advantage. Certain names, which still exist in our regulations, or are used by military writers, might well be abolished: much misapprehension would thus be removed. Thus the terms "contact squadron" and "contact patrol" are superfluous, for to maintain contact is, unless special orders have been given to the contrary, the duty of all detachments sent to reconnoitre the enemy, whether these are strategical or tactical. Again combat patrols have two distinct characters, first, "offensive patrols sent in the direction in which one expects to find the enemy, and secondly, defensive patrols sent towards the flanks whence the enemy is not expected to appear." (*Cav. Tr.*, p. 204). These two duties are quite dissimilar, the one tactical and the other protective, and yet one term is used for both. In regard to standing patrols the name is applied to a patrol sent to a certain spot with orders to remain there a given time and then return, but, if the patrol is simply sent to visit that spot and return at once, it is called a reconnoitring patrol, a name applicable

to all patrols. The two duties are really similar, the difference being purely a matter of time. Strategical duties require strategical patrols, tactical duties tactical patrols, and protective duties protective patrols, and these names should suffice for all practical purposes, any variations in the nature or scope of the duties being a matter for the patrol orders. One other name would have to be added, *viz.*, "communicating patrols," which are required for purposes of intercommunication. So long, however, as our regulations use other names, in addition to these, we must be prepared to accept them and endeavour to disabuse our minds of any misconception regarding the principles laid down.

Strategical and tactical patrols are offensive in nature, while protective patrols are defensive. It is essential to have a very clear conception of this difference, for the former "regulate their movements according to the position of the hostile columns," while the latter "regulate their movements with reference to the force covered, with which they must keep in communication" (*Cav. Tr.*, p. 176); they are in fact sensitive feelers which must remain permanently attached to the body and must not seek contact with the enemy to such extent as will uncover the force they are protecting.

Until it is very clearly recognized what is meant by "contact" we shall not eliminate that serious fault, so often seen on manœuvres, of patrols, when contact is established, halting and either standing still out in the open or engaging in rifle fire with the enemy. All reconnaissance is divided into two stages, (1) the preliminary approach till contact is established and (2) the action subsequent to the establishment of contact. The duty of reconnaissance may be compared to the raiding of an orchard by boys: due secrecy and precaution must be taken in approaching the orchard, but, when the orchard is reached, *the fruit still remains to be picked*. So it is with reconnaissance; to establish contact still leaves the object of the mission to be attained, for true reconnaissance only commences when contact has been established, all else has been but preliminary. Just as the boys would avoid guarded gates leading into an orchard and seek for gaps in the hedges, so should patrols and other larger reconnoitring bodies avoid the risk of capture and delay by roaming in front of the enemy's position, and seek for gaps round the flanks and rear. The true road to information most distinctly lies round the flanks of an enemy, for the front will usually be well guarded. This leads us to consider to what extent reconnoitring detachments should fight, and the answer is clear.

*Only to such extent as will further the quest for information.* Thus, a troop or squadron may engage the enemy with rifle fire in order to distract his attention while a smaller party continues its operations in another quarter. Against a hostile position or outpost line a show of attack has often proved successful in inducing the enemy to expose his strength. This may be carried out mounted or dismounted. Thus Lieut. Strumm, during the Franco-German war, on one occasion, seeing some vedettes and unable to find out anything definite, formed his troop in line and rode straight at a copse behind which he believed he saw a larger detachment. The enemy took the bait and out streamed a long line of horsemen with two closed squadrons in support. Inclining away from these, he came under heavy rifle fire from concealed infantry but managed to escape with but little damage. If dismounted action is preferred, the detachment should break up into small parties of two and three men and open fire from a number of widely extended points. It must often necessarily occur that information will have to be fought for, and an outright attack is justifiable when it is believed that some valuable capture may be made, such as a field post, despatch rider, etc., for the captured papers may prove a valuable acquisition, but when

feasible it will be better to effect the capture by laying an ambush. On meeting a hostile patrol it should be avoided, but when it threatens to attack and such attack cannot be avoided without detriment to the object in view it must be accepted. If by chance a body of the enemy is suddenly met with and the surprise is mutual, the best plan will be to act promptly. Sergt. Baxter, of the 16th Dragoons, during Massena's retreat from Portugal, when riding with only five troopers, came suddenly on a piquet of fifty French infantry cooking their food, who, instantly running to their arms, killed one of the Dragoons. Baxter, however, charged them impetuously and, with the help of some villagers, managed to take forty prisoners. A demand for surrender often induces the enemy to lay down his arms. Lieut. Konig, during the Franco-German war, surprised a party of French infantry and demanded their surrender, telling them that they were surrounded. The infantry at once laid down their arms, but as Konig only commanded a small patrol he broke up their arms and rode away. Such exploits have a great value if successful, for the enemy who escapes, in order to excuse his defeat, spreads a false report as to the strength of the party which attacked him. This occurred in Lieut. Konig's case, for the



defeated party reported the presence of a very strong body of German cavalry.

It is essential that the commander of a reconnoitring detachment shall have a very clear idea as to his mission, and much will depend on how his orders have been written. A capital guide for such orders is contained in Sec. 139 "Cavalry Training" which gives six points of information which should be included in the instructions given to a patrol leader. These points hardly go far enough for complete orders in the case of patrols moving to a great distance, and the following may perhaps be found useful in drafting orders:—

(1) The enemy is, according to the latest reliable information, posted as follows . . .

(2) Our army is posted as follows . . .

*In both cases give the fullest information available. This is especially necessary in regard to co-operating forces, to which and through which the patrol may at times be able to send valuable information.*

(3) The intentions of the G.O.C. are . . .

*The more thoroughly the patrol leader knows the plan of his superior, the more intelligently will he be able to carry out his task, and the more eagerly will he co-operate.*

(4) Your mission is to . . .

*This must be clearly defined and if there are*

*alternative missions they should be written in the order of their importance (see page 55).*

(5) You are to proceed to . . . . .  
*Only approximate distance and direction can be given.*

(6) You may expect to be absent till the . . .  
*This information is necessary in order to enable arrangements for subsistence, etc., to be made. If reliefs are to be sent out state this.*

(7) You are to send in reports to . . . . .  
*Here state place and afford all information in regard to signalling stations, relay posts, etc., which may be arranged by the main body, or order the patrol leader to arrange for these. (See page 153).*

(8) The main body will move to . . . . .  
*Mention probable moves of main body and other detachments, especially of other patrols sent by different routes, as it may often occur that a patrol, unable to transmit its information, may send it through another patrol; or that a patrol which has been unable to find the enemy, may move and co-operate with a more fortunate patrol.*

Orders, on the above suggested lines, would contain such a large amount of valuable information, in case they fell into the hands of the enemy, that the leader of a patrol should, after committing them to memory, either leave them behind in regimental custody or destroy

them. Under no circumstances should he carry them with him unless they are written in cypher. It follows, as a natural course, that, having received his orders, the leader explains them fully to his men. In regard to the various points in the above orders, the object, or objective, laid down in the mission is the chief point for a leader to consider, the other points are simply to give him all the information possible to assist his action and much of this information must be looked upon as approximate only. "If the enemy is not found where he was expected, or *vice versa*, the reconnoitrer should think for himself what his commander would like him to do; in the former case, information to this effect, usually called 'negative information,' should be sent back, giving the hour of the visit, and *the scouts should push on until they find the enemy.*" (*Cav. Tr.*, p. 183.) This would invariably be the rule in the case of all patrols sent to seek the enemy. Contact once obtained must be kept persistently, no matter what the orders are as regards the period of absence indicated in the order.

During the Franco-German war several instances occurred of patrols, when in contact with the enemy, being recalled. The results were often most unfortunate, in that the supply of information was thus voluntarily discontinued;

there was also often a waste of power, for the same patrol, or another one, had to be sent out almost immediately, thus necessitating a double traversing of the distance. The nervous tension which a patrol incurs in maintaining contact is, however, so great that it is certainly advisable to recall patrols periodically, but any such order for recall should be accompanied by a relief patrol. A continuity of contact and consequently of information will be thus maintained. If an order for recall is not accompanied by a relief the patrol commander must bear in mind the order :—"If a subordinate, in the absence of a superior, neglects to depart from the letter of his orders, when such departure is clearly demanded by circumstances, and failure ensues, he will be held responsible for such failure." To disobey an order for recall, when in contact with the enemy, would, in nine cases out of ten, be justified, and the tenth case would generally be a doubtful matter. The authority despatching a patrol must keep his hand, so to speak, on the pulse of the patrol, he will be able to judge from the distance traversed and the reports submitted what amount of nervous strain has been endured.

A contact or reconnoitring squadron will vary its procedure, from time to time, as circumstances may direct. If the distance to be

covered is great, it may find it useful to send out patrols to certain fixed points in advance, there to halt and remain in observation till joined by the main body. The latter would, on arrival on the line of these points, send forward a fresh set of patrols and so on, working forward, step by step and stage by stage, much in the same way as protective cavalry on the march (see page 66). This system saves the horses and keeps the whole command knit together. When contact with the enemy has been obtained the patrols may either be left in permanent observation or be relieved from time to time. So long, however, as a patrol is capable of carrying on its work it should not be relieved. When moving at a fast pace and to a great distance the squadron commander should periodically take stock of his men and horses and weed out those unfit to travel further at the moment. He will be guided by circumstances as to whether those eliminated are to rejoin later or be left behind as relay posts, etc. Some of these posts may, with advantage, be stationed at bridges, ferries, fords, etc., to observe these points and to keep communication open. As to the number of patrols a squadron commander may send out, this should be left to his discretion, though special objectives may be indicated to him. Constant communication between the squadron and its

patrols can only mean wear and tear of horse-flesh, but every fraction should always know where the main body is, so as to be able to communicate without delay when necessary. The squadron must keep close to its patrols, ready to support them at a moment's notice, but, while doing so, should conceal itself as much as possible. Provision should always be made, in view of unforeseen events, such as a squadron having to vacate a pre-arranged rendezvous or being driven from it by the enemy, to enable communication to be restored. If the rendezvous is vacated at will a post should be left behind to direct the patrols. If a forced departure has been caused by the enemy's action, patrols may find it best to rejoin the nearest relay post and be redirected from it. Landmarks may be utilised as an alternative rendezvous, or position of temporary communicating post, or a place where fresh orders may be found concealed. It will be well too to arrange some indication by which a returning patrol may learn whether a rendezvous is still occupied, otherwise it may march straight into the hands of the enemy. Due measures for protection must be taken on the march and at rest. When halted it will generally be advisable to call in any advance guard and rely for protection on scouts; the command will thus



be united in case of a sudden attack. Bivouacs, in European warfare, are detrimental to health, so billets should be sought for in farms and hamlets. Before occupying a farm, etc., the exits and approaches must be seized, all residents collected and counted, and thereafter a roll-call held every few hours. The next step will be to arrange protective measures and to each cossack post or picquet a villager should be attached. The residents should be distinctly informed that any attempt to communicate with the enemy or any reprisals made will be severely punished. Preparations may even be made ostentatiously to fire the buildings in case of attack. To save the men from fatigue villagers may be impressed to rub down the horses, cook food, make barricades, etc. In requisitioning supplies the first thing to do, should the necessary articles be procurable, will be to fill up the haversacks or canteens and grain bags with cooked or tinned food and grain, in case a hurried departure has to be made. While all is fair in war, undue harshness must be avoided, and the residents be given to understand that the duties imposed on them are strictly necessary, and so long as they fulfil them there will be no illtreatment. Carts and vehicles may, with advantage, be impressed occasionally, and used to save one's own horses. A receipt should be given for all articles requisi-

tioned and, if the residents have fulfilled the duties imposed on them, a certificate to this effect will be appreciated by them as a means of safeguard when the army approaches. As every slip of signed paper may afford information to the enemy it would be well if some system were introduced of having a code name for each unit. Thus instead of a requisition being signed Major Browne, 10th Hussars, it might be signed Major Browne, Legion. The latter being the code word for the 10th Hussars. This system might be extended to the addresses on messages, etc. Ruses and stratagems may frequently be employed with advantage to obtain the surrender of places, and to disseminate false information, but care must be taken that they are not too obviously patent as such. Mention has been made of how Lord Moira tricked the French by ordering supplies along routes which he did not intend to take. During the Franco-German war Lieut. Von Hirschfeld, commanding a patrol which ultimately dwindled down to himself and a lance corporal, when obliged to pass through a large place, calmly walked through the streets, revolver in hand, ordering billets. Lieut. Von Konig, sent with three men to reconnoitre Saargemund, found the bridge over the river barricaded and saw infantry walking about the

streets and a squadron watering at the river. A few shots sent the latter scampering back into the town. A wayfarer, happening to pass, was captured and, being promised the alternative of a good reward or confiscation of his property, was induced to take the following summons to the mayor of the town :—

“As the town of Saargemund is barricaded, I cannot consider it open, and I will bombard it, unless it is cleared within an hour.”

“KONIG.”

In a short time the prisoner returned with an “Assurance that the barricade should be removed, and that the French troops were leaving the town.” Konig then, “taking the countryman with him as hostage and, leaving one man on the right bank of the river, went into the town, where the burgomaster, Baron de Geiger, soon appeared, and handed over his card as a sign that the town was taken.” The townsmen surrounded Konig in a threatening manner but he managed to rejoin his patrol. Consequent on his action German troops were at once sent up to occupy the town.

An independent strategical patrol, that is one unsupported by a squadron, has a most difficult task to perform, especially if acting in country overrun with hostile troops, or where the inhabitants are unfriendly. The leader will con-

stantly be faced with difficult problems which will tax his ingenuity to the utmost, he must at all times be vigilant, be sometimes prudent and at other times audacious and, his party being small, he must husband its resources. Let him remember some of the maxims laid down by De Brack. "Train the mind to perceive and judge clearly, not to be surprised, and to adopt promptly the best methods under all circumstances." "In war, reflection the most sustained ought to go hand in hand with action." While the commander must act as circumstances may direct, still some of the lessons handed down to us will serve him as a guide. Where the detachment, in addition to the patrol proper, consists of men for relay posts and signalling stations he will, on arrival at such a position as he considers suitable for a post, take stock of his horses and leave the weakest behind at the post. Before leaving the post he will make sure that all the men whom he takes with him will be able to recognise it in case of having to ride back with reports. He will also arrange some plan or indication by which, if the post is captured or has, owing to the presence of the enemy, to be vacated, a despatch rider, returning to it, may avoid capture or find the new position. As the patrol proceeds on its journey a talk about the country passed through should form the

staple conversation, so that its features may be impressed on the memory. The back view must be carefully studied to take note of landmarks for the return journey, and, as landmarks show a different aspect from different points of view, steps should be taken to locate them by other objects in the vicinity. Stunted trees, broken gates, heaps of stones, broken culverts, etc., and all points which tend to identify cross roads or places where tracks diverge must be noted. Where such indications are absent they should be improvised by making a pile of stones, knotting the tops of bulrushes, long grass, etc. If one of the party is left behind, arrangements may be made for him to pick up the track by dragging a bush along the road. Tracks that he is not to take may be marked by a small line of stones. Every bend in the road, every large boulder and every piece of cover ahead must be looked on as a possible place for ambush, or as in the occupation of the enemy, and so to be approached with caution. This may all be difficult at first but it is astonishing how quickly the eye can be trained to note such objects. In regard to the inhabitants of a hostile country, however friendly they may appear, they must always be suspected and mistrusted. All villages which it is not necessary to enter for purposes of information should be avoided, but when this

is necessary they should be entered with due precautions, and the stay cut as short as possible. It is not advisable to off saddle, feed or water in a village. Always when dismounting the rifle must be taken out of the bucket and held loaded in the hand. Hospitality must always be suspected, as it is frequently given to put a detachment off its guard. At Maizar, in Waziristan, in 1897, a column met with a serious disaster because the officers accepted the hospitality of the villagers, who directly they saw the troops off their guard, made a sudden and unsuspected attack. Sir Thomas Baker nearly fell into a similar trap during the Afghan War of 1879. On the other hand, the inhabitants must not be ill-treated, for they may, at times, do good service by taking in a wounded comrade. On leaving a village it will be as well to endeavour to put the inhabitants off the scent of the track the patrol desires to take by moving a short distance along some other route, and then diverging when out of sight. It should be a rule never to sleep where the evening meal has been taken, but to change the bivouac when it gets dark; to march as concealed as possible and utilize all shadows cast by rows of trees, hedge rows, etc., to take advantage of cover, to move slowly and to save the horses, but to cross the open at speed so as to get out of sight as



quickly as possible ; to avoid raising much dust by opening out. By night when sounds are more distinctly heard than by day, troops should march on the soft side of the road. All defiles, such as gaps between hills, deep lanes, etc., should be passed as rapidly as possible and also all woods, if they cannot be skirted. Advantage must be taken of every good look-out place to rest in, and it should be a rule to work along the highest ground available and to ascend all heights for purposes of observation. The leader should always bear in mind the possibility of having to scatter suddenly and retire, and, as the march proceeds, note positions to serve as rallying points, and when about to incur any risk, such as entering a village, decide previously which of these points shall be the rendezvous. If advancing at some little distance from a ravine it will of course be well to have a flanker out along the edge of the ravine. It is at times advantageous when operating in country infested with partisans, such as the guerillas in Spain, in 1808-1814, the franc-tireurs in France, in 1870, and the tribesmen on the frontiers of India, to move in pairs at intervals of from 100 to 200 yards. Experience has proved that the enemy will not take the risk of firing at one pair, with the chance that the other pairs may attack them in their turn.

The men of each pair should not march abreast of each other, but one slightly behind the other and, when turning corners or entering ravines, one should drop behind a little but keep his comrade in view. Single file is not recommended, as cases have occurred of the men of a patrol having fallen into an ambush, one after the other, the whole patrol being captured in this way. Trickling one after the other is, however, sometimes useful to get from cover to cover unobserved. There is one formation which can never with safety be dispensed with, and that is to form the party into a pair of advanced scouts and a support. While yet distant from the enemy these scouts must be considered as a protective detachment sent out simply to protect from surprise and, incidentally, to observe the enemy if he happens to be about. Such scouts can be directed by the leader who rides with the support. The method of such direction would be something as follows:—"Go ahead to that clump of trees and when you signal all clear I will come up with the patrol," and so on from cover to cover. But when the enemy have been sighted and exploration commences the scouts change their character, they no longer regulate their movements with reference to the patrol but the latter follows their movements. The leader now becomes a scout himself and

rides forward with an assistant. He orders the patrol to conform to his movements, or to such signals as he may give. Thus he may leave the patrol behind a copse while he rides on to a hillock to observe, and from this hillock he may call up the patrol, or he may leave it to await his return, or he may direct it to proceed to some point and there halt till he rejoins. Scouts are thus, like all reconnoitring parties, divided into two classes, offensive and defensive. As to action in the presence of the enemy and the various methods of obtaining information, these must be left to the intelligence of the leader, who must combine cunning and stratagem with boldness and audacity.

On contact with the enemy being established, concealment becomes of great importance, for, if the patrol be discovered by the enemy, every movement will be carefully watched and opportunities for obtaining information consequently limited. De Brack relates how General Curely, when a Captain, in 1809, successfully reconnoitred the Austrian army. At the head of a hundred troopers he secretly passed round the flank of the Austrians and secreted himself in a village in the rear. While concealed he managed to capture some stragglers from whom he obtained much useful information. A large herd of cattle moving towards the village was

also seized and kept concealed in the wood till it was nearly dark, when, placing his men dismounted in the centre of the herd, he, under cover of the cloud of dust raised by the cattle, rode into the village. "The night, the dust, the weariness of the enemy's troops, the absence of any fear among the Austrians of an attack from the side from which the herd came served the designs of Curely so well that he penetrated the centre of the village, and, with his own hand, shot one of the sentinels of the Archduke. At this signal his men mounted their horses and, after having used their sabres for some minutes and profiting by the astonishment and confusion of the enemy, left the village," and carried back valuable information as to the actual location of the Austrian army.

Lieut. Strumm, during the Franco-German war, once remained the whole of the night in the Diesen wood, right in front of the French main body and within their outpost line. "Not a man dared leave his horse for a moment or close his eyes." At 3 a.m. three men were sent to reconnoitre towards Porcelette and Buschborn. They returned at 4 a.m., having seen a large camp. On their return the patrol moved to a farm to water and requisition supplies but, being observed by a hostile squadron, had to bolt back to their old hiding

place. No sooner had they reached it than they saw large bodies of the enemy moving into position. The hostile squadron again appearing, the patrol moved off and, on reaching a point some distance off again saw large bodies of the enemy moving into position. Excited by his great discovery Strumm at once sent off a report which, however, only reached Headquarters twenty-two hours later. This was not Strumm's fault but it shows that important information must be sent direct to supreme Headquarters and not through the usual channel. Soon after this had been despatched the patrol met an orderly with an order for them to return. On reaching Forbach the patrol had done 75 miles in direct line and the horses had had hardly any water or food ; bread soaked in brandy and water had kept them on their legs. Strumm himself had had only a little chocolate and a gulp of brandy and water, and when he reached Headquarters he was half dead "from exhaustion and tension." With difficulty he kept himself awake to write his final report and then fell into "a deep and death like sleep."

A good pair of binoculars will often enable the strength and composition of a column to be computed from a safe range, but a closer approach will generally be necessary. No



large column marches so closed up but that gaps will occur here and there and no outpost line is so continuous but that it can be penetrated at some point. The enemy must be "slim" somewhere as President Lincoln said when he urged a reconnaissance of General Lee's line of march. To find these weak points and break through them will be a difficult matter no doubt during the day, but the risk must be taken and such favourable factors as the carelessness of the enemy, rain, fog, etc. will assist those who take the risk. Thus Lieut. Von Bredow, in the Franco-German War, managed to get in between two hostile columns and, concealing himself, watched for his opportunity, which soon came in the form of a gap between two units. Rain was falling at the time and trusting that the enemy would not distinguish his party in their great coats he rode slowly up to the column till opposite the interval when he dashed through with the loss of one man wounded. Darkness will naturally be favourable for such a purpose and an extraordinary story is related of Mosby, the confederate scout, who, having captured two Federal troopers one evening at a short distance from a column on the march, ordered them to ride on either hand of his horse. Thus escorted he rode towards the column and alongside of it for some distance,



noting each unit as he passed. The two prisoners who accompanied him knew that he had his revolver ready to shoot them, and were too dazed to make any attempt at escape or to give warning.

As the action of scouts is so closely connected with that of patrols most of the above lessons apply to them as well as to patrols.

The procedure of tactical reconnoitring squadrons and patrols is somewhat different to that of strategical reconnoitring bodies in that they must act with greater audacity. "It may be necessary for them to drive back hostile patrols engaged on similar missions." It is morally certain that when two forces have approached within striking distance the struggle to obtain and to deny information will be mutual, so that there must be a series of encounters between the opposing patrols. It must be borne in mind however that the longer such fighting delays the acquisition of information, the greater will be the anxiety of the commander in regard to his plan of action. Hence it is of the utmost importance, as has so often been stated, that while such fighting is in progress, scouts shall endeavour to elude the enemy and carry out their mission as quickly as possible. Once more, too, must the fact be impressed that the true road to reconnaissance

lies round the flanks and towards the rear. At the battle of Chancellorsville, in 1863, General Fitz Lee, who commanded the Confederate cavalry, passed round the flanks of the Federal army and, reaching their rear, rode forward to a small hillock to reconnoitre personally. "Below and but a few hundred yards distant ran the Federal line of battle, there was the line of defence with abattis in front and long lines of stacked arms in rear. Two cannon were visible in the part of the line seen. The soldiers were in groups in the rear, laughing, chatting, smoking, probably engaged here and there in games of cards and other amusements, indulged in when feeling safe and comfortable awaiting orders. In the rear were other parties driving up and butchering beeves."

It must not, however, be imagined that the hostile front is to be barred altogether as a route for information. If it can be penetrated the object will be secured the quicker. As a rule this can only be done when the enemy's attention is distracted by other events, though at times it may be done by stratagem. During the combat of Vic Bigorre in Spain, the Duke of Wellington "was desirous to know whether a small or large force barred his way, but all who endeavoured to ascertain this fact were stopped by the fire of the enemy. At last

Captain William Light, distinguished by the variety of his attainments, an artist, musician, mechanist, seaman and soldier, made the trial. He rode forward as if he would force his way through the French skirmishers but, when in the wood, dropt his reins and leaned back as if badly wounded, his horse appeared to canter wildly along the front of the enemy's light troops, and they, thinking him mortally hurt, ceased their fire and took no further notice. He then passed unobserved through the wood to the other side of the hill, where there were no skirmishers and, ascending to the open summit above, put spurs to his horse and galloped along the French main lines, counting their regiments as he passed. His sudden appearance, his blue undress, his daring confidence and his speed made the French doubt if he was an enemy, and a few shots only were discharged while he, darting down the opposite declivity, broke from the rear through the very skirmishers whose fire he had first essayed in front. Reaching the spot where Lord Wellington stood he told him there were but five battalions on the hill."

A French officer distinguished himself in the same war during the fight on the banks of the Carrion river. A French column, endeavouring to force the passage of the river, arrived at the

only bridge, which the English had just destroyed as the head of the column reached it. The advance was stopped, when "suddenly a French horseman, darting out at full speed from the column, rode down, under a flight of bullets to the bridge, calling out that he was a deserter. He reached the edge of the chasm made by the explosion and then, violently checking his foaming horse, held up his hands, exclaiming that he was a lost man and with hurried accents asked if there was not a ford near. The good-natured soldiers pointed to one a little way off and the gallant fellow, having looked earnestly for a few minutes as if to fix the exact point, wheeled his horse round, kissed his hand in derision and, bending over his saddlebow, dashed back to his own comrades, amidst showers of shot and shouts of laughter from both sides." At the siege of Bhurtpur, 1826, some native cavalry sowars volunteered to ascertain at what points the moat which surrounded the fortress was fordable. Pretending to be deserters, they galloped out of our lines, rode to the edge of the moat and, declaring that they were deserters, implored the defenders to show them how they could enter the fort. A shallow ford was pointed out to them, on which they wheeled about and galloped back to camp.

Tactical patrols may either be used indepen-

dently or be supported by squadrons, as in the case of strategical cavalry. All patrols, however, whether supported or not, will, so far as the working of scouts goes, act in the same manner as strategical patrols, in that during the preliminary phase of reconnaissance the leader will ride with the support, and during the exploring phase as one of the advanced scouts. No matter whether the patrol consist of only four men, this distinction should be preserved, for, when contact is established, the leader must be the chief scout. A squadron commander sent out with a squadron to reconnoitre cannot, in the same manner, act as the chief explorer: he has other duties to perform and delegates the task of exploration to his subalterns and his best N.C.O.'s, but he must bear in mind that personal reconnaissance can never be dispensed with and, thus, when an important discovery has been made, he must ride forward to see for himself. The distance between the starting point and the enemy will guide him whether he should change the character of his patrols from defensive to offensive. Usually the distance will be so short that there will be no necessity for this, and no idea must be so adhered to as to become a fetish. It may at times be advisable for him to send out a patrol to act independently, but, where this is unnecessary, he will



follow his patrols so closely that he is at all times ready to support them and drive back hostile parties. Though every advantage must be taken of cover still concealment is not of such importance as in the case of a strategical reconnoitring squadron. So long, too, as the objects of the mission are fulfilled, it will be advantageous to utilize all the fighting power available, not only in furthering the mission but in delaying and deceiving the enemy. Such fighting must be dependent on the ability to withdraw from it at will and to be ready to co-operate with the main body. The best guide as to when fighting is permissible, or not, will be to realise that the mission comes first, fighting afterwards.

Tactical combat patrols are nothing more nor less than simple tactical patrols. They are utilized:—(1) "When there is a possibility of surprising the enemy" when formation and concealment are of greater importance than protection, such as that afforded by an advanced guard, and (2) when for purposes of attack "the force concentrates for the approach march." —(*Cav. Tr.*, sec. 149). In these cases the patrols are supplementary tactical patrols sent, even though "many of the original reconnoitring detachments may not yet have rejoined," with the object of giving the commander "com-



plete information and freedom of action." In the first case it would be unsound to support the patrols with squadrons as these would detract from the concealment necessary for a surprise. In the latter case support may be necessary to drive back hostile patrols. The use of these patrols applies practically to cavalry combats where events succeed each other so rapidly that supplementary tactical reconnaissance is most essential. The rule that detachments must "*rejoin on their own initiative the moment their task has been accomplished*" applies most particularly to such squadrons as may have been sent out to support the above patrols. There will be little difficulty in doing this as when the combat occurs the squadrons will be in contact with the enemy and, therefore, close to their main body. The manner of such co-operation will depend on the *coup d'oeil* of the squadron commander who, if he is wide awake, may intervene with remarkable success on the enemy's flank or against their batteries. To provide against the mishap that may occur of such intervention being mistaken for a movement of the enemy each squadron, as it joins in the attack, should send an orderly or two at full speed to inform the nearest troops of its action.

During the combat defensive combat patrols are necessary to keep watch and ward. They

will be sent out to the flanks and rear to provide against the appearance of the enemy in unexpected quarters. This is simply a case of providing for the unforeseen, even though such appearance is looked on as an utter impossibility. Only by the use of such patrols will it be possible to ensure an engaged command from attempts to turn its flank and rear. The action of such patrols being simply that of protection they must conform to the movements of the main body; they should take up the best available position for observation and get into communication with the main body and, remembering that the best form of reconnaissance is the offensive-defensive, they should send a scout or two further afield to explore and so to obtain more timely information than would be possible by observation alone.

All "look out men," "observation posts," and "communicating patrols," whose duty it is to keep the companies, squadrons, regiments, etc., from which detached, acquainted with the events occurring round them, really come under the head of combat patrols, for a combination of the duties of reporting on the movements of co-operating and of hostile bodies can hardly be avoided. To have a knowledge of the movements of co-operating detachments is every whit as important as information in regard to

the enemy. Seldom has a large battle taken place that some mischance has not occurred through lack of this information. At one time friends have been mistaken for foes and the tide of success has consequently been stayed, at another time success gained by a unit has not been supported by the units on either hand, because the latter were unaware of it. Constantly have friends fired at each other and not unfrequently, too, have they been left behind during a retreat to become prisoners. The loss of a brilliant success to the Confederates at Bull Run, when Elzey's and Jones' brigades were mistaken for the enemy, has been related on page 39. At the battle of the Modder river a detachment managed to cross the stream and advanced to turn the right of the Boer position. The attack seemed to promise success when, suddenly, as the men were crossing an open space, our own guns turned on them. This was due to the fact that no information had been sent back that the detachment had managed to find a crossing, hence it was concluded that they were the enemy.

## CHAPTER VI.

### TRANSMISSION OF INFORMATION, WRITTEN MESSAGES, DESPATCH RIDERS, AND RELAY POSTS.

THE transmission of information comes under two heads, the report and the means by which it is transmitted. A report may be verbal or written. The great point about a verbal report is that it should be delivered calmly and deliberately; the recipient can do much towards this, if he sees a despatch rider come in excited after a long ride and brimful of his information, by not being in a hurry to hear the report. A few questions as to the rider's horse, etc. will soon put the man at his ease, while peremptory commands such as, "here, come closer," "I can't hear what you say there" will probably completely upset the equilibrium of the orderly. All hurry and confusion is to be avoided on both sides. In delivering the message it is important that a distinction be drawn between the actual report itself and any additional information the rider may have to give from his

personal knowledge, otherwise it will be impossible to distinguish between what the sender and what the carrier have to say about the matter. If there is time the message should be taken down in writing and read over to the orderly, this will serve to correct any false impression given or received and also be of use as a record. As to the writing of reports our regulations are very clear, but there is much improvement required in this important matter. First there is the form of the report, which should be strictly in accordance with that laid down and, though this form is pasted into the army message book, mistakes frequently occur. The date, though it may be immaterial if the operation for which the information is afforded covers but a single day, is nevertheless material when the document is required for future reference, or when the operation covers several days duration. Omission of the number is a more serious matter, for not only is it required for purposes of reference, but by its means the recipient of the message may learn whether he has, or has not, received all previous messages despatched. Thus, if he has received messages Nos. 1, 2 and 3 and later on receives No. 5, he knows at once that No. 4 has been either delayed, lost or captured, and can consequently inform the sender of the fact, but, if the

numbers are not given, there will be no means of finding this out. The sender often, too, forgets to give the unit to which he belongs. This must be clearly stated, thus "Lieut. Smith, 'B' squadron, 3rd Hussars." It is not sufficient to simply sign as Lt. Smith, for, though the O.C. 3rd Hussars may know him, it is probable that the staff officer who collates the reports may not, but if the unit is mentioned he, knowing the disposition of the 3rd Hussars, can judge approximately the whereabouts of the patrol under Lt. Smith. The place of despatch is also a necessary entry for when this is absent the recipient is utterly in the dark as what locality the information refers to, unless this is mentioned in the body of the report. Lastly, the time of despatch is an important item; if this is not stated there will be a doubt as to how far the enemy were when the message was sent, and where they may chance to be at the time of its receipt. Thus the report may state that a brigade of cavalry have been seen advancing along the main road; when this report is received the enemy may be 10 miles or 2 miles away. A report as follows:—

"To G.O.C. 3rd Brigade.

A hostile battery, escorted by a squadron, is halted near the road. Heavy clouds of dust about 1,000 yards to its left indicate a mass of moving cavalry.—SMITH, Lt.



is not an unusual one to receive. This report is of course a bad one, but has been rendered tenfold worse owing to the omissions in its form. If in proper form it would run :—

“ To G.O.C., 3rd Brigade, Blackwater.

8th August, 1910, No. 6. A hostile battery, escorted by a squadron, is halted near the road. Heavy clouds of dust about 1,000 yards to its left indicate a mass of cavalry.

Lt. Smith, ‘B’ Squadron, 3rd Hussars, Bagshot. Despatched 12.30 p.m. by despatch rider.”

Though still a bad report something can be made of it, for it is possible to infer when and where the enemy were seen.

In regard to the actual wording of the report brevity and conciseness are essential, as the sender has neither the time nor paper to write a long report, nor the recipient time to read it, and a long story, as everyone knows, often obscures the point of the story itself. Now in the message above the G.O.C. would like to know why the battery was halted and what cavalry was raising that dust and in what direction it was moving. It may not have been possible for the patrol at that moment to report on the cavalry and the leader may, very rightly, have judged that it was necessary to let his general know of the presence of the enemy as

early as possible, but the report would have been more useful if it had run somewhat as follows:—

“A hostile battery, horsed by chestnut horses, which look very exhausted, and a squadron of lancers, with red and black pennons, is halted near the road midway between the 16th and 17th milestones. Heavy clouds of dust 1,000 yards to east of battery indicate cavalry, moving eastward along the main road; am proceeding to reconnoitre the latter.”

The chestnut horses may identify the battery, and the pennons the regiment, and both together the hostile cavalry brigade. The chances are that Lieut. Smith has very correctly noted the condition of the horses, for why should a battery be left by the road side under escort? In all probability the pace has been too hard for the guns. Hoping that this may be the case, but still not over confident, the G.O.C. 3rd Brigade sees that he has a possible advantage over the enemy. The actual position of the enemy at 12.30 is also known, and its position at time of receipt of message can be approximately judged. Lastly, Lieut. Smith is on the track of the hostile cavalry and at any moment a second report may arrive from him.

Every report should very clearly distinguish

between what the writer has seen himself and what he has heard. In stating anything that may have been heard the reliability of the source should be stated and a note made as to whether there is an intention of verifying it. If possible no hearsay should be reported until verified. It would be most dangerous to state that "the villagers reported about 1,000 horses camped here last night, this was probably the 4th brigade of the enemy's cavalry." The chances are that there were not more than 200 horses at the outside. A patrol is not sent out to report on every little detail of information it comes across, the number of reports it can submit are limited and it must, therefore, only report on relevant and important points. It would not ordinarily report that it had met a hostile patrol, but, if the latter is the first such patrol seen, it is a different matter, for it indicates the presence of the enemy for the first time. It may at times be useful to state that a certain point has been reached and no trace of the enemy discovered. When a report is despatched before the receipt for a former one has been received it will be advisable to repeat the previous information. The last report of all should carefully recapitulate all the information previously submitted in case any of the messages may have been intercepted or lost.

This plan will give an opportunity of correcting any mistakes which may have crept into former reports, and, as the patrol commander is the best judge of the inferences to be drawn from his information, it will not be amiss if he amplifies his last report, giving his view of the situation and his inferences.

The most reliable information is valueless if it arrives too late. This is a fact which should be impressed on despatch riders and all through whose hands it may pass, *en route*, to its destination. A subordinate, who is simply a forwarding agency, incurs a grave responsibility if, disbelieving the report or misjudging its importance, he delays its transmission. Sir James McGregor, who relates many interesting anecdotes of his brother-in-law, Colquhoun Grant, tells us how General Dornberg withheld an important report, from Grant, addressed to the Duke of Wellington, just before the battle of Waterloo. Grant had established a field intelligence department and managed to obtain the services of a Frenchman who had access to the French "Bureau de la Guerre." On 15th of June the man sent a note, which I have seen, noted thus by the Duke of Wellington in his own hand, "Received from Grant, June the 18th, eleven o'clock," that is to say, just as the battle of Waterloo was commencing, and this

document and its story were very remarkable. Had it been received, as it ought to have been, two days before the battle, no surprise could have happened, and the great battle would have been fought and won on the banks of the Sambre. The contents were in substance, and I think nearly in words, besides a great deal of minor information, thus:—"Les routes sont encombrées de troupes et de matériel, les officiers de toutes grades parlent haut que la grande bataille sera livréé avant trois jours." Why was this important notice withheld from the Duke until it was too late? Grant was too far in advance of the British outposts to be near his agents, other agents were employed by the Duke in various directions, and to ensure the regular transmission of their reports, General Dornberg was placed at Condé, I think as an intermediate authority. That general mistook his position, and fancied that he was to judge of the importance and value of the reports; hence, on receiving Grant's important letter, he sent it back saying, "that so far from convincing him that the Emperor was advancing for battle, it assured him of the contrary. Grant instantly conveyed his letter direct to the Duke, but it only reached him on the field of Waterloo too late to be useful."

As illegible messages are as bad as late



arrivals, messages should always be written in a clear firm round hand. Pencil writing has a tendency to be faint and also to rub out easily while the message is in transit and often reports have to be read when the light is failing, or after dark by the light of a bivouac fire, care should therefore be taken to make the writing as dark as possible. The same applies to rough sketches which may accompany reports. It may be at times necessary to send reports by cypher. If a cypher has not been previously arranged, the despatch rider can be told the key word, or the report may commence with a hint as to the cypher used, thus "We last met at ———— etc.," the name of course being written in cypher. There are a variety of ways, besides cyphers, by which reports may be rendered unintelligible except to the recipient, for instance a long strip of paper may be wound round a rifle barrel or scabbard and then written on; it will be legible only when rewound on a similar scabbard or barrel.

Information can be transmitted by various means such as carrier pigeons, visual signalling by helio, flag or lamp, telegraph, telephone, or despatch riders. Pigeons are useless for moving forces. Visual signalling by helio is often impossible owing to lack of sun. Lamps are cumbrous to carry and flags are useful only



for short distances. Telegraphs require skilled operators and also that the line be in possession. Telephones can be laid by an advancing force and, when the telegraph line is in possession, a portable telephone is easily carried by means of which the telegraph wires can be utilized. Despatch riders are, however, the usual means by which patrols must send back their reports but they are liable to capture and their use entails much wear and tear of horseflesh, while at the same time they limit the number of reports which can be submitted, and every report sent weakens the strength of the patrol. When, therefore, they are used every endeavour should be made to assist patrols in transmitting reports by a well arranged system of relay posts. These should be so organized that messages can be despatched, not only by means of relief despatch riders, but by any of the other of the above means which may be available ; thus a report may under favourable circumstances be transmitted one stage by despatch rider, the next by helio, and the next by telegraph or telephone.

The requisites for a despatch rider are that he shall be able to read and write, have a good memory, a good eye for country, and a good horse. A good memory is essential that he may be able to learn the report he carries by heart

in case he loses it, or it becomes illegible in transit, or he has to throw it away if he foresees the chance of being captured. Ability to read and write is requisite that he may be able to refresh his memory from the report he carries or to take down a verbal report dictated to him. A good eye for country and a good horse enable him to find his way and to reach his destination by day or night, through good and bad country and through friends or foes. A good despatch rider should remember the following rules :—

- (1) Save his horse *en route*, so as to be able to travel far and long and call on it if pursued.
- (2) Keep his eyes open *en route* for further information.
- (3) Never get confused or excited in making a verbal report.
- (4) Make a marked distinction between the verbal report itself and any other information he may be able to give and not mix the two up together.
- (5) Take a receipt for the message.
- (6) See that the report gets through to its destination at all costs.
- (7) When approaching a group of officers call out the name of the addressee, in case he may happen to be there.

- (8) Show the message to other officers commanding troops nearer the enemy, in case they may be able to act on the information.

Important reports should be sent in duplicate and by different routes or, if for purposes of safety and mutual support, the two orderlies ride together, they should separate when there is a risk of capture. It may often be impossible for a despatch rider to rejoin his unit and, if his commander considers this may be the case, he should note on the message that the rider be retained. Whenever possible, a rider should rejoin, as the receipt he brings back with him is the only means by which the sender can be sure of the safe delivery of his message. The return of the rider also maintains his unit up to strength and keeps the same men working together, which in itself is a distinct advantage. The rider's horse should be changed if necessary, this may be done at relay posts where horses can now and then be given a few hours rest and a good feed. With advantage, too, a comrade may, when he can be spared, accompany a rider going back from the main body, as thus the patrol will be reinforced. There are a variety of means by which despatches can be concealed, such as being sewn into the clothing, boots and saddlery, carried in hollow canes,

inside articles of food, etc., but all these means are, more or less, liable to discovery on a strict search being made. Often a false despatch, carried in addition to the original and concealed one, will stop further search. The best plan undoubtedly is to let the rider learn the message by heart, and to carry the letter well weighted so as to be able to throw it away readily.

Relay posts may either be dropped *en route* by patrols, squadrons, etc., or be sent out by the main body. A combination of both plans will be best. It will, by no manner of means, be a simple matter to arrange a system of posts where these have to change their positions from time to time, as would be the case with advancing forces. To evolve a good system it will be necessary for the divisional cavalry and protective cavalry to arrange mutually the position of the posts in the zone between them, and so also between the latter and the strategical cavalry, and again, between the latter and its reconnoitring detachments. In all such arrangements the map must be carefully studied and every advantage taken of easily recognisable places, such as cross-roads, etc. All such places are, however, from their very nature liable to be visited by the enemy and the posts driven from them. Such mishaps must be foreseen and provided for. It may sometimes be advisable for

two posts to roll up at night and form one strong post, but such a movement should be forward and not retrograde, that is the rear post should move forward where feasible. In estimating the strength of a post too much reliance must not be placed on its ability to communicate by means of signalling, etc., as such means are liable to break down, consequently every post must have its quota of despatch riders. Each post must have distinct orders as to when and where it is to rejoin. To ensure an effective system of working a large number of posts they should be formed into sections, with a commander to each section.

Our regulations state that the position of a post should be clearly marked by day and night. This may be a dangerous proceeding when near the enemy, or where the inhabitants are unfriendly, but should always be done when possible without risk. A coloured lantern by night and a small flag by day will be useful. Where these guides are dangerous the post must keep a sentry always on the look-out for orderlies riding in who have not before visited the post, but by far the best plan, when placing such posts, will be for each post, as it is established, to send a couple of men to ride on with the next post and see its position. Every post should also have two distinct landmarks.



These should be known to all despatch riders who may have occasion to visit it. One of these landmarks must be in the post itself, where information can be lodged should the post move to a new position. The second landmark would be at some distance from the post; it should be first visited by despatch riders, who from there would hail the post and, if no reply were given, would realize that they must proceed with caution, on the chance that the enemy, having driven the post from its position might have laid an ambush to intercept messages. It is important that the commander of the post should keep a register of the messages which pass through his post, and also a record of such information as he may be able to pick up. This should be kept in duplicate by means of carbon paper and one copy be transmitted to headquarters, not as a whole at the end of the day, but piecemeal every few hours. The object of this register is twofold. First it forms a diary from which, if an officer passes the post, he can be supplied with the latest information available at that post, and secondly the transmission of a copy, by instalments, to headquarters enables the latter to ascertain whether all reports have reached them. This register would of course be a most valuable document if it fell into the hands of the



enemy, it must, therefore, when not in actual use, be concealed in some suitable hole or corner, and only taken out when there is an entry to be made. Cyclist orderlies are invaluable for relay posts and motor cyclists more so.

## CHAPTER VII. *contd.*

### **ADVANCED, FLANK AND REAR GUARDS AND OUTPOSTS.**

PROTECTIVE detachments, such as advanced, flank and rear guards and outposts, regulate their movements not with reference to the enemy but with reference to the force they protect. The same principle applies to all their integral parts, which are detached for purposes of reconnaissance and observation, and which regulate their movements with the body from which detached. These several detachments are not independent in the same sense as a reconnoitring detachment, that they provide information simply for protective and not for strategical or tactical purposes. De Brack writes of an advanced guard commander thus:—

“The small force which he commands often occupies but a small portion of his thought, for it is merely a point in the great space which demands his attention. He does not act for it, but for that which follows it. He is not acting individually, like an officer on a reconnaissance ;

his troops are merely a part of a whole, and if necessary he must sacrifice them, even to the last man, to hold for his army corps, or for his division, the key to a position, the entrance to a defile, etc."

These lines apply to the commander of every protective detachment. In *Cavalry Regulations* it is, however, stated on page 149 that "Brigades should conform in their pace and movements to the unit forming the advanced guard, the movements of which will be regulated by the instructions of the cavalry commander. At first sight it may appear that this is a contradiction of the principles above stated, but this is not really the case, for the action of an advanced guard may be divided into two phases, *viz.* (1) when the enemy is still distant, and (2) when he is within striking distance. In the first case protection is all important and, so far as the reconnaissance of the vanguard goes, timely warning of the proximity of the enemy alone is required. In the second case protective, or defensive measures are of less importance than tactical or offensive ones, and the fullest information is required as to how and where the attack can be best directed against the enemy. What really occurs to cause this change as to which body conforms to the movements of the other is that the rôle of the advanced guard changes from the defensive to

offensive, according to whether the enemy is distant or at hand. This change is, in principle, the same as that laid down for scouts and patrols on page 130. During the first phase the commander of the main body delegates observation and reconnaissance to the advanced guard commander who moves along a predetermined route to precede and cover the main body. During the second phase the commander himself joins the advanced guard, for he can no longer delegate his duties of observation and reconnaissance but must be well up to the front, in order to see for himself and to take the fullest advantage of such time and space as may be available for manœuvring purposes. From his advanced position he still directs the movements of the main body, but such direction is carried out by a staff officer deputed for that purpose. This subject will be again touched on later, but for the present the action of an advanced guard, when the enemy is still distant, or rather believed to be at a distance, will be considered.

#### ADVANCED GUARD WHEN THE ENEMY IS DISTANT.

The duties of an Advanced Guard in this case are to protect the force it covers from surprise and, if the enemy is encountered, to delay

his advance and give its own main body time to prepare for action, offensive or defensive, as the case may be. To carry out these duties it is formed into a main guard for fighting and a vanguard for observation and reconnaissance. The commander must receive explicit instructions as to his action on meeting the enemy and he must not "adopt a manœuvring rôle" without orders. He must so dispose his advanced guard that it affords protection to the main body from the moment the latter starts from camp or *bivouac*. He should, therefore, himself start from camp at such time previous to the main body that he may have ample time, not only to be such distance ahead of the latter as shall protect it, but as will enable him to have his command distributed for protection. The fault, so often seen on peace manœuvres, of an advanced guard being detailed after the force has formed up and moving simultaneously with the main body cannot be too severely condemned, for, in order to gain its distance, it has to move out at far too hurried a pace and in a disorderly manner. This procedure is induced by the fact that there is usually but little distance between the opposing forces, but often defeats the object for which the advanced guard is sent out, in that the collision occurs before the latter has been able to carry out its mission. On active

service, when the advanced commander has received sufficient warning that he is to command, he should, as early as possible, interview the outpost commander and himself move out to the outpost line, in order to learn all that there is to be learnt as to the enemy and the country in his front. His dispositions when he does start will be all the better for this procedure.

The distance which should intervene between an advanced guard and the main body can never be laid down even approximately, for it depends on a variety of considerations, such as the nature of the country, the armament of the enemy, etc. Often, the armament of the enemy may not have been correctly ascertained, thus it may be believed that the enemy supposed to be in the neighbourhood is unaccompanied by artillery and yet suddenly a field gun may open fire, and drop a shell into the main body. It should then be a principle that the advanced parties of an advanced guard should be so far ahead of the main body as to protect it from such artillery fire, and the best way for this to be done is for these parties to be in occupation of all points from which fire can be opened on the main body before the latter comes within range of such points. The same principle applies to the different portions of the advanced



guard, though not to the extent of safety from artillery fire, it being sufficient that each party in rear be protected from rifle fire. The total distance from the extreme point of the advanced guard to the head of the main body would be in all not less than from four to five miles. This of course refers to fairly large bodies. The distances to be maintained must of course be dependent on the ability of each party to support the one in front, and in regard to the main body the distance must also depend on the length of the column and the time it requires to form for action, also on the time likely to be taken in the transmission of information, for it will hardly avail if the enemy, say a body of rapidly moving cavalry, ride in simultaneously with the information of their presence.

This occurred several times during the Boer War. One occasion being when a force was surprised near Rooival Junction. As the scouts reached the crest of a ridge a line of Boers galloped clean through them and on to the column. This example is also a proof that it is not safe to trust to the protection afforded by a thin line of advanced scouts. These must be supported by smaller detachments gradually increasing in strength, such as patrols, then supports, and last of all the main guard.

“Instead of maintaining a uniform rate of

march and of distance, the advanced guard should advance rapidly from position to position, or from defile to defile." This system has much to recommend it ; for

- (1) It enables a party to reach a good look-out point sufficiently far ahead of those in rear to allow of time to take a good look round the country and explore any feature, such as a village, defile, wood or ravine, before the body in rear has closed up.
- (2) To make sure that the enemy is not in occupation of any point in advance from which he could open fire on any formed body in rear.
- (3) To obtain more timely warning of the presence of the enemy than would be possible by a more slow and deliberate advance.
- (4) To obtain opportunities for resting horses by dismounting, for watering them, and for interrogating inhabitants.

It cannot, however, be too strongly impressed on all that this system of moving rapidly from cover to cover must not be allowed to develop into a rash advance ahead of the party in rear, but that each successive advance must be followed by a halt, till the party in rear has closed up to such distance as may be necessary for support and communication.

The vanguard is divided into an Advanced Party and a Support. The duties of the former are :—

- (1) To reconnoitre the road and the country on both sides of it and cover the advance in such a manner as to prevent any unnecessary interruptions of the march of the main body.
- (2) To gather rapidly as complete and reliable information of the enemy and of the tactical features of the ground as possible.
- (3) To drive back all small hostile parties who may attempt to oppose the advance.

These duties are best carried out by forming the advanced party into a number of patrols. Where a single squadron forms the entire advanced guard, that is furnishes also the main guard, the advanced party would usually be formed into three groups or patrols, one for the road and two flank ones for the sides, but much will depend on the nature of the country and the strength of the squadron. For the present it will be sufficient to consider a case where three patrols only are sent forward.

When working over wide open plains, such as occur in India and Africa, the flank patrols may perhaps be withdrawn but this is not as a rule advisable, for deep ravines, quite invisible from the road, often exist in such plains, where

an enemy can lie concealed. Similarly, when advancing over such plains, the distance between the point of the advanced guard and the main body should not be reduced, for there may well be a deep ravine ahead. Maiwand, in Afghanistan, and Sannah's Post, in the Transvaal, and a host of other examples should be a warning that, even if cover for an enemy cannot be seen, that is no reason to believe it does not exist, even in open country. The three groups must maintain such distance from each other as will ensure constant co-operation. This is imperative, as the three groups mutually assist each other to search villages and cover lying along and close to the main road. Ordinarily the frontage covered would not exceed two miles, probably less when the country was much enclosed. This frontage would not suffice to protect the main body from artillery fire from the oblique front. It will therefore be necessary to send additional patrols to work on the outer flanks of the advanced party to a distance of four to five miles from the road. It is preferable, when the advanced guard consists of a single squadron, for these to be specially detailed by the main body, as otherwise the strength of the advanced guard is depleted. When, however, the main body consists of infantry, with one squadron of divisional cavalry forming the van-

guard, the latter will of course supply them. The same would be the case when more than one squadron forms the advanced guard. (See page 177). A point never to be lost sight of is that the flank groups regulate their movements with the central group, the commander of the whole advanced party should, therefore, as a rule, ride with the central group, from which position he will :—

- (1) Regulate the movements of the groups under his command.
- (2) See that communication is kept up with the support.
- (3) Sift all information and transmit it to the advanced guard commander.

He must remember that the centre party, moving as it does on the road, has an easier task than the parties moving across country. His first duty is to see that the centre does not forge ahead of the flanks. He must note carefully whenever opportunity occurs the condition of the horses ridden by the flank parties, and, when necessary, relieve them. Map in hand and eye on the country he must in ample time appreciate the amount of reconnaissance he can carry out with his command, and to what extent he requires assistance from the support to search distant objects or side roads, drive back hostile patrols, etc.

The special duty of the support is to assist the advanced party by reinforcing it from time to time, and even by relieving it entirely when the work has been long and hard. The vanguard commander rides either with the support or advanced party, but, as a rule, his position is forward with the centre advanced party. The special duty of the mainguard is fighting, but it will reinforce the support from time to time, as circumstances may direct. When the enemy is encountered the commander will naturally ride forward and join the vanguard.

Should the centre advanced party halt, the support should on no account halt, but push on and join the advanced party, or halt behind some cover sufficiently close to enable the cause of the halt to be ascertained. By thus acting the support will be in a position to afford any necessary assistance; if assistance is not required it will halt, dismount and rest the horses, watch the next advance of the centre advanced party and remain in observation till the mainguard closes up. Should the support see the centre advanced party trot ahead, it will not follow suit, it being understood that the latter is only doing so in order to increase temporarily its distance for the purpose of reaching a good look-out point, or exploring some cover before the support comes under fire



from it. The mainguard will act in exactly the same manner in regard to the support. The same principle applies to the connecting files between the advanced party and support, the support and the mainguard, and the mainguard and the main body. Thus, if the centre advanced party halts, the connecting files, so long as they see the support following, will ride up and join the former and remain in observation when it again moves off.

The method of examining localities is based on the probable action of the enemy in regard to its occupation. It is obvious that the enemy will be anxious that his retreat be assured, hence any threat to occupy and command the exits of the position will either result in the retreat of the enemy or in an attack by him to drive back the parties threatening the exits. If the exits are not threatened the enemy will feel secure and, knowing that he can retire at any moment, will reserve his fire for those approaching the front, till such fire can be delivered with decisive effect. To be ready for every contingency the enemy too will, if in force, have a reserve in rear of the position and, in the case of cavalry, the led horses will certainly be in rear. It may of course occur that a small party may so conceal itself, with the object of laying an ambush, as to show no trace

of occupation from the rear of the position, but this is a dangerous experiment and liable to recoil on those who lay the ambush. Still such ambushes have often been successful. We can then, from these considerations, judge how a locality should be examined, and the deduction is that, before any attempt is made to probe the front, the exits be first threatened or occupied. The scouts of a patrol should ride rapidly round the flanks and rear of the locality and signal back information. If there are no signs of the enemy, the patrol may ride through the village but, if there is time, the best plan will be for it to pass round the flanks and carry out an examination from the rear, as this will be a further insurance against an ambush. In searching a locality a careful look-out should be kept for any indications of the enemy, such as hoof marks, etc., near the water supply, haystacks, etc., where an enemy may have watered or fed.

The passage and examination of a defile is a problem in which such close co-operation is necessary between the advanced, flank, and rear guard that it will be considered later.

A rule, never to be disregarded, is that all mounds, ridges, eminences, and even lofty houses, which are within a reasonable distance, should invariably be ascended for observation.

Even if such places are at some distance, it will be advisable to send a scout or two to take observations, nor should such places be readily vacated. Thus, if an advanced party reaches a mound, whether on the road or to a flank, it should post a scout to remain in observation till relieved by a scout from the support, who will in turn be relieved by the main guard. This system to be continued by the main body and the rear guard. All side roads and ravines should be similarly treated, the point being watched till the main body and rear guard are clear of it. This is important, to prevent the possibility of an enemy eluding a party in front and surprising that in rear, as has too often occurred on service, a sudden attack having being made down a side road or through a glen or ravine.

When there is a body of protective cavalry in front of an advanced guard the duties of the latter will be much simplified, but it will never be safe to trust entirely to the protection thus afforded and an advanced guard should, therefore, supplement its protective reconnaissance by offensive reconnaissance and despatch a tactical patrol to the front with definite instructions as to itinerary or objective, such as a village or ridge four to five miles ahead of the advanced parties. On reaching its objective

this patrol will halt and remain in observation till the advanced guard comes up, when it may be again despatched to the front. The object of such a patrol is simply to assist the advanced parties in obtaining more timely warning of a possible enemy. With protective cavalry ahead this patrol will serve as a communicating post. If there is no protective cavalry in front, special tactical patrols must naturally be sent from the main body, but they do not supersede the patrol above mentioned, which is part and parcel of the advanced guard itself. A case in point where such an advanced patrol would have been useful was at Springs, during the Boer war, when artillery fire was suddenly opened on the main body from a point two miles in advance of the head of the advanced guard.

When crossing open plains where little cover is available each portion of the guard should move on a widely extended front; they will thus afford the minimum mark should they suddenly come under fire; the discomfort of marching in dust will be avoided, and all ranks being to the front will be able to assist in observation.

Much will depend on the way scouts and patrols work. On page 130 it was stated that protective scouts should be directed from the patrol. This point may again be

referred to here. The scouts are, in the case of the advanced parties, protective, in that they are simply feelers sent out to cover the advance of the patrols and are not independent. They do not direct the patrol from point to point but are themselves directed by it. The great point in this system is that periodical halts for observation are enforced, and it is obvious that more can be seen while halted than when moving. Thus the patrol leader, having reached some cover or good look-out position, orders his scouts to trot on ahead to some other point in advance. While the scouts are riding ahead the patrol dismounts, rests the horses, scans the surrounding country, watches the advance of the scouts, and is ready in position to open fire in case a party of the enemy attempts to drive in the scouts, or to gallop through them as at Rooival. Directly the latter have reached their objective they too dismount and observe. Meanwhile the patrol, seeing the scouts dismount, remounts and rejoins them at a trot, and the scouts are then sent ahead again. There is thus constant observation and defence at a very fairly rapid pace, without undue strain on the horses and, in addition, the chances of falling into an ambush are reduced to the minimum.

All scouts must be well acquainted with the following signals :—

(1) Weapon held above,      Enemy in sight  
and as if guarding, the head.      in small numbers.

(2) As in (1) but weapon      Enemy in sight  
raised & lowered frequently.      in large numbers.

(3) Weapon held up at full      No enemy in  
extent of the arm, point or      sight.  
muzzle uppermost.

With reference to the foregoing a squadron detailed as advanced guard might be told off as follows :—

<i>Commander.</i>	<i>Words of Command.</i>
Squadron Comdr.	“ Right Half Squadron” “ Vanguard;” “ Left Half Squadron” “ Main Guard.”

On these commands the half-squadron commanders turn about and give :—

Vanguard Comdr.	“ Right Troop,” “ Ad- vanced Party,” “ Left Troop,” “ Tactical Patrol and Support.”
Main Guard Comdr.	“ Left Half Squadron,” “ Main Guard.”

The troop commanders then turn about and give :—

Adv. Party Comdr.	“ Right Section,” “ Right Adv. Patrol,” “ Centre Section,” “ Centre Adv. Patrol,” “ Left Section,” “ Left Adv. Patrol.”
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Support Comdr. "Right Half Section,"  
 "Tactical Patrol," "Remainder Support."

The tactical patrol, on being told off, at once rides out of the ranks, receives its orders and moves off as early as possible. As the other portions of the advanced guard move off, connecting files are left behind to connect with the party in rear. It has already been mentioned, on page 163, that hurry and the consequent confusion should be avoided in moving out an advanced guard and it is, therefore, far better that, after the guard has been detailed and told off, the advanced parties shall trot out first, to be followed by the support when a suitable distance has been obtained, and in the same way, the main guard after the support. While thus waiting their turn to move off, the support and main guard should send out scouts for flank protection.

A squadron detailed as vanguard to an advanced guard, the main guard of which is formed of other cavalry or of infantry, might be told off as follows :—

<i>Commander.</i>	<i>Words of Command.</i>
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Vanguard Com- mander.	Number off by troops from the right.
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The troops number off 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Vanguard Com- mander.	“No. 1 Troop,” “Right Advanced Party,” “No. 2 Troop,” “Left Advanced Party.” “Right Section, No. 3 Troop,” “Centre Advanced Party,” “Re- mainder,” “Support.”
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The troop leaders now turn about and give:—

No. 1 Troop Leader.	“Right Section,” “Right Patrol,” “Centre Section,” “Centre Patrol,” “Left Section,” “Left Patrol,”
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No. 2 Troop Leader.	do. do. do.
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No. 3 Troop Leader.	“Right Section,” “Centre Advanced Party.”
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The advanced party is thus formed of a troop for either flank with a centre party detailed from the support. The reason for this formation is suggested by the fact that, when hostile parties are met, they will be best driven back by threatening their flanks and that, with a view to this method of action, the flank advanced parties shall, at the outset, be as strong as possible. The formation further assists in turning the flanks of villages, woods, etc., and working through defiles. Another valuable point gained is that the extreme flank patrols mentioned on page 168, can be detailed from

the vanguard. In every way the formation now suggested is superior to the former and, whenever possible, the advanced guard should be made sufficiently strong to permit it. The centre advanced party being formed only of one section is admittedly weak, but, if the enemy is encountered, it is obviously preferable to be strong on the flanks, and, under any circumstances, the centre can be reinforced by the support when necessary.

#### ADVANCED GUARD WHEN WITHIN STRIKING DISTANCE OF THE ENEMY.

When within striking distance of the enemy the action of the main body may be either defensive or offensive. In the case of an advanced guard to a mixed force, where the main guard is formed of infantry and the vanguard of cavalry, the latter will, no matter whether offensive or defensive action is contemplated, change its rôle and give up protective for tactical reconnaissance. The vanguard commander must bear this change of rôle in mind and keep a firm hold of his advanced parties in order that they may not become so seriously engaged as to be unable to be redirected for tactical reconnaissance. When the main body is composed entirely of cavalry, and a defensive attitude, by means of dismounted action, is

enforced owing to the nature of the country or other circumstances, the action of the advanced guard will depend on the orders it has received ; it will not, as a rule, be necessary for it to procure tactical information, as there will be ample force at the disposal of the G.O.C. to arrange for this by means of special reconnoitring detachments, but he may decide to depute this work to the advanced guard, which then becomes a reconnoitring detachment. Should such a course of action not be ordered, the advanced guard may form a pivot of manœuvre on which the main body forms for defence, or it may be left to protect the front till a position has been occupied in rear. If, on the contrary, offensive action is to be carried out the G.O.C. Brigade will join the advanced guard as soon as the presence of the hostile main body has been ascertained. He will be accompanied by all unit commanders, while the main body, having assumed a preparatory formation for attack, is led forward by an officer specially deputed for the purpose. The rôle of the advanced guard has again ceased to be protective and it has become a reconnoitring detachment with patrols, well out to the front, searching for the hostile main body. Directly the latter is within attacking distance, the old advanced guard, now a reconnoitring squadron, can be best utilised as

a pivot of manœuvre. The G.O.C. directs it to the most suitable position available and reinforces it with the guns, while the main body proceeds to work outwards from the pivot and then inwards to the enemy, when a favourable position for delivering the attack has been obtained. During the advance the best system to pursue would be to make bursts from one objective to another, the reconnoitring detachment leading the way. Thus, on reaching a ridge, the squadron would halt while the patrols moved forward to reconnoitre and the main body would join the squadron by coming up at an increased pace. As soon as the main body joins the squadron the latter would make a fresh advance to a second objective, and so on, from point to point.

#### FLANK GUARDS.

The majority of defeats on the battlefield have been brought about by unforeseen flank attacks; during the pursuit further disaster has been caused by such attacks combined with one on the rear guard, and in many cases also by the enemy passing round the flanks and attacking the head of the column. The advance of columns has similarly been retarded. It will thus be seen that protection for the flanks is often of more importance than for the front and

rear. This is curious, for to form line to a flank is naturally easier than to deploy to the front or rear ; it is, however, explained by the fact that a flank attack has a great moral effect on those attacked. It is usually quite unexpected and halfway measures are often adopted to repel it, for uncertainty prevails as to how far the attack is serious and whether the front and rear may not be attacked in turn.

Flank protection is provided by detachments which may move parallel to the main body or remain stationary until it has passed. The latter would be the case when movement across country was impossible ; it entails much expenditure of strength, for successive detachments have to be thrown out and it has the further disadvantage of delaying the march. When the country is open the parallel movement will be adopted. The formation in which the flank guard moves will be dependent on the amount of cavalry available and the length of the column to be protected, while the distance to the flank will be regulated by the same considerations as those which apply to an advanced guard. When but few cavalry are available and the column is a long one it will be sufficient to throw out a parallel line of scouts or patrols ; these may or may not be supported by small detachments of infantry, moving on their inner



flanks. With an ample supply of cavalry the formation may be that of an advanced guard, with the main guard marching on the outer flank of the main body, and the supports and patrols beyond the former again. The longer the column the more patrols will be required on the flanks, and it will be necessary with a very large number of patrols to have more than one support. The patrols would work one behind the other and in constant co-operation, in order that gaps may not occur through which an enemy may pass unobserved. To prevent the latter occurrence each patrol should carefully watch the advance of the patrol in front and rear, jump forward to a post vacated by the patrol ahead and, when it itself vacates a post, signal the fact to the patrol in rear. The rule laid down for advanced guards, as to a continued observation from commanding points and of side roads and ravines or glens, applies also to a flank guard.

#### REAR GUARDS.

A rear guard is usually formed in the same manner as an advanced guard but reversed. In the case of one formed of all arms the cavalry will furnish the rear party and detachments to watch the flanks. The duty of the rear guard to a force pressed by the enemy is to keep the

enemy back at all costs and give the main body time to retire, in order to recover its organisation and morale. The commander will have a most difficult task to perform and one which will call for the constant display of energy and resource. Not only must the forward advance of the enemy be hampered, but all attempts at out-flanking the rear and so pressing forward to strike the main body be watched, and the less the pressure on the rear the more must the flanks be watched. The rear and flank patrols must, therefore, endeavour to maintain constant contact with the enemy, and a free use of offensive patrols must be made to procure positive and negative information of his intentions. Every endeavour should be made to lure the enemy in a direction contrary to that taken by the main body. This may often be effected by concealing the main guard and sending the rear parties to show themselves from a flank. The magnetism which draws cavalry to oppose cavalry will in many cases draw the hostile cavalry away as desired, and thus, for a time at least, the pursuit may be forced into a false direction. Constant recourse must be had to stratagems and ambushes, for they enable an inferior force to attack a superior one ; even one successful ambush will have wonderful effect in restraining the ardour of the pursuit.

The destruction of railways, bridges, obstruction of roads, fords, etc., are all expedients by which the enemy's advance may be delayed, but no serious destruction should be carried out without special orders from the supreme commander, who may possibly desire to resume the offensive at a later stage and be unable to do so owing to unauthorized destruction. There are *pros* and *cons* to the burning of villages, hamlets and stretches of grass and scrub. Care must be taken that the smoke does not form a screen under cover of which the pursuers may dash forward to close quarters; on the other hand an ambush laid in a burning village may be most successful. At Vlakfontien the Boers surprised a rear guard by setting fire to the grass. The rear guard was at the time halted, when suddenly a heavy cloud of smoke rose at some little distance and a few moments later, as suddenly, a large body of Boers galloped through it and completely defeated the rear guard, composed of 230 yeomanry, a company of infantry, and two guns. Thus fires can be used by both friend and foe alike.

The distance to be maintained from the main body will generally be regulated by the same principles which decide that for the advanced guard. When it is a case of giving the main body time to recover its organization and morale,

the distance may be as great as is compatible with the safe withdrawal of the rear guard. It is a most difficult question to know when to retire from a position. If carried out too soon the enemy will not be sufficiently delayed, if too late disaster may result. As a general rule it will be advisable to retire to a second position directly the enemy commences the attack, which will then be launched *en l'air* and the enemy forced to resume a march formation ; and when again opposed to again deploy and reconnoitre ; all this will cause delay and loss of time which is the main object of the rear guard.

In retiring two general principles should be observed *viz.* (1), the retirement must be concealed from the enemy and (2), there must be tactical reconnaissance of the ground in rear. Retirements should be gradual, a few men at a time retiring, preferably from the centre at first, as a cessation of fire from that quarter will not indicate the retirement to the enemy so much as one from the flanks ; a cross fire from the latter too aids the retirement from the centre and keeps up the deception. When the flanks retire they should see that they do not mask the fire of those who have already retired and taken up a new position. Men who have retired should rapidly be posted in such positions and their fire so directed as to cover the retire-

ment of the remainder and also to command places vacated. Fire on vacated points has a wonderful deterrent effect in preventing their occupation by the enemy.

Tactical reconnaissance of the ground in rear should be especially arranged for, in order that successive positions in rear may be selected and their approaches and exits be ascertained before hand. A staff officer should be deputed for this purpose, and he should be accompanied by the adjutant, or other representative, and two or three orderlies from each unit. These will be invaluable to lead the units rapidly into position, and may also be profitably employed, if time is available, in impressing villagers to provide hasty cover, tools, materials for barricades, also food and water. It is of the utmost importance that the exits from the position should be well known, so that when a retirement takes place the best route may be followed; every party should, therefore, have ground scouts working in its rear, ready to lead the way.

As soon as the enemy commences to press the pursuit, the formation of the rear guard will necessarily change from that of an advance guard reversed, in that the rear patrols will be driven in on the support and the latter on the main guard, but every endeavour must be made to preserve at least two distinct divisions. This

is essential, for the best form of retirement is in successive bodies, one retiring through or past the other.

Intercommunication between the several portions of the guard must be particularly arranged to ensure co-operation, and to see that no portion of the force is left behind. At Stormberg a detachment of 400 men was left behind and forced to surrender; its loss was only discovered after the column had got back to camp. Every party is responsible that it has scouts out to watch the movements of co-operating parties.

In occupying a position the troops should be extended as widely as is compatible with co-operation and intercommunication, and thus the enemy is led to believe that the strength of the rear guard is greater than it is. Ammunition must be freely supplied and be ready for distribution at positions to be taken up in rear.

A counterstroke may at times be delivered with great effect, but it must be clearly understood what a counterstroke means. It is an advance from cover against the enemy with the object of driving them from a certain point. In the case of dismounted action such a course would usually be unsuitable for cavalry unless combined with a mounted attack, as, in case the offensive failed, it would be a most difficult matter



to withdraw. A combination of mounted and dismounted action is different. The former may or may not precede the latter; the best results would seem to be possible when dismounted men follow up to take the fullest advantage of the mounted charge, but the circumstances of each case will be different. Short distance mounted or dismounted counter-strokes really come under the head of ambushes, but the distance must be very short to ensure surprise. Opportunities for counterstrokes should be watched for when the enemy is crowding into some cover lately vacated, crossing bridges, or debouching from defiles.

A great problem in dismounted action is to know what to do with the led horses. When it is a case of moving back rapidly from cover to cover, the led horses must be close behind so as to be readily mounted. When, however, the country is very intersected and rapid movement out of the question, for friend and foe alike, the horses should be sent right away, as otherwise they only become an encumbrance.

### OUTPOSTS.

The action of the enemy in advancing against troops in position, or in camp, may be either (1) To make a determined attack; (2) To harass their rest, or (3) Simply to obtain information.

Thus the duties of outposts are threefold, viz. :—

- (1) To delay the attack till plans have been matured to repel it.
- (2) To ensure the rest of the troops.
- (3) To form a screen against attempts to procure information.

For these purposes there must be arrangements both for resistance and reconnaissance.

In regard to the former, the distribution of the portion of the force forming the line of resistance and the distance to which it proceeds will depend on the nature of the country, the composition of the force protected, the time it requires to form for action, and how far it is desired to conceal the composition of the force from the enemy. Attempts to procure information may be made by a reconnaissance in force, which, however, comes under the head of an attack. The alternative to this procedure is for small patrols and even individual scouts to endeavour to elude observation and gallop through the outpost line, for which purpose they will generally approach as close as possible and, having concealed themselves, watch for a favourable opportunity, probably under cover of bad light, just before dawn or dark. To prevent such attempts will entail a very continuous line of small posts, in supplying which one of the objects of the enemy will be obtained,

namely that of harassing the rest of the troops. The alternative to a number of small posts is to take the initiative against the enemy and, as has already been stated, to make him waste his strength in defensive and not offensive measures ; also to select camps which will conceal the disposition of the troops from the enemy ; and to prevent troops and followers from intercourse with hostile inhabitants and the latter from entering the camp on pretext of selling provisions, etc. Information as to the composition of the force and plans of the commander too often leak out from within the camp. Measures must therefore be taken to prevent this. First and foremost, the number of non-combatants must be reduced to the minimum, and those it is essential to retain should be registered, their description and antecedents recorded, and finally they should be camped together in a well-demarcated bivouac and placed under a provost guard, who must hold a roll-call at 'lights out' and at 'veille.' By locating them in a distinct quarter a further advantage is assured, in that, in case of attack, they can be controlled and so prevented from adding to the confusion by moving about the camp. Information as to plans is often due to indiscretion on the part of officers, to the unnecessary discussion of such plans, and also to the promulgation of operation

orders over night. An overnight order for an operation to commence at daylight should simply state that troops are to be formed up ready to move off at such and such an hour, and the actual operation order should be issued after the troops are formed up. If a night attack or march is intended the orders should be sent round just prior to departure. It seems to show a want of trust in immediate subordinates not to confide a proposed movement to them, but unhappily experience has proved that such confidence is a mistake, a few indiscreet expressions, or preparations, and the plan is ruined. A commander is then absolutely justified in concealing his plans on occasions from even his chief staff officer, for a secret known to two is no longer a secret. Such reticence may be annoying, but it should be appreciated. Stonewall Jackson, when once asked about his plans, replied "Judge, can you keep a secret?" The Judge thinking that a secret was to be told him answered he could. "So can I, Judge," was the reply. But even Jackson himself unwittingly could give away a plan. His old negro servant well knew when a battle was to take place—"Gwine to be a big fight; Massa been a praying all de night."

In regard to resistance to delay the attack the distribution of the troops will depend much

on the nature of the ground, but concentration is preferable to dispersion. "A position in readiness" is the ideal to aim at. This may be defined as one in which troops are concentrated only at vital points; intermediate places, *which may or may not* come into the plan of attack or defence, being occupied only when the necessity to do so arises. This is but the principle, its application will vary according to circumstances; thus, if an intermediate point cannot be easily occupied when required, it must of course be held from the outset, but in such a case that point would appear to be a vital one. A system of continuous posts and piquets at short distances apart may of course be necessary at times, but, when possible, should be avoided. It has many disadvantages, the chief being the large number of men employed, with the consequent diminution of the striking power of the force.

The reconnaissance of an outpost line must be both offensive and protective. When the enemy is known to be in the neighbourhood, offensive reconnaissance must be pushed forward to maintain contact. The importance of this need not be reiterated here, it has been fully discussed previously. When there is no trace of the enemy, the surrounding country should be searched and any enemy within strik-

ing distance located. Much will depend on the number of cavalry available for an exploration, while the distance to which patrols should be sent will depend on the nature of the country and the obstacles it opposes to a hostile advance. If there are sufficient cavalry, the distance to which patrols proceed should usually not be less than ten to twelve miles with a normal complement of cavalry, but every case must be judged on its merits.

Protective reconnaissance, both by day and night, will be necessary in front of the line of resistance to ensure protection from artillery fire, and to search places where an enemy might concentrate, prior to attempting a surprise. Such reconnaissance may be carried out by standing or moving patrols. When the latter are sent out at night they should acquaint the picquets they pass of the direction they take and the probable time of their return, and, in addition, arrange some signal by which their approach can be identified, in order to prevent their being mistaken for the enemy. Their use should be limited. When standing patrols are sent out to occupy a position they are in the habit of visiting, they should approach it with caution, as the enemy may be beforehand with them and ambush them on their approach, nor should such places be visited at regular hours.



All sentries and look-out men should be posted in pairs. By day a commanding position is the best for a sentry, but by night he should be posted on low ground, so as to get a clear view against the skyline. Firing at imaginary objects, which so disturbs the rest of the troops, will often be obviated if, just before dark, all objects such as bushes, etc., are carefully scrutinized and their changing shape appreciated, for often a branch of a tree or stunted bush is mistaken for an enemy.

One very important point, which must not be overlooked, is that time is required to lay out outposts, and that these should be in position before dark. A commander should, therefore, endeavour to get into camp at least two hours before dark. If the march has been delayed it may indeed be preferable to halt wherever the force may find itself two hours before sunset.

#### PASSAGE OF DEFILES.

This is a most difficult problem and calls for the closest co-operation between advanced, flank, and rear guards. When cavalry are able to ride along the crest of the heights on either hand, the matter will be much simplified, but it will be a very different thing when the movement has to be carried out on foot. At first sight it would appear that cavalry should never

be used to force a passage through a difficult defile, but the necessity for such use may easily arise. Cavalry have often been successfully used in mountain warfare and in Shadwell's "Campaign in Switzerland" an instance is related of its successful employment, when a large force was sent ahead to seize a strategical point some 12 to 14 leagues distant. Napier writes of Colonel Ferriere, 3rd French Hussars, that he "was continually proving how much may be done, even in the most rugged mountains, by a small body of good cavalry." In the Afghan War, 1839-41, cavalry was profitably employed in escorting convoys through difficult mountain passes. In 1877 Gourko succeeded in crossing the Balkans, practically unopposed, by sending his cavalry ahead to seize the southern exit of the Kazanlik pass.

Two principles apply to the passage of a defile, *viz* :—

"Never trust yourself in the valleys without securing the heights."

"Make yourself master as rapidly as possible of the farthest exit."

Flank protection for the occupation of the heights is arranged for by one or other of the following methods:—

(1) The advanced guard, as it advances, throws out the necessary flank picquets, or (2),

separate flank guards are detailed for the purpose.

The first of these appears to be applicable only when the defile is a very short one indeed ; it seems quite unsuitable when it is a long one, for the advanced guard has its own special duty to perform to cover the advance, and to carry out the second principle, above stated, of making itself master, as rapidly as possible, of the farthest exit ; if it gives the flank picquets its strength is depleted and the advance delayed. In many cases it will admittedly be a risky venture to secure the farthest exit, but "a venture to gain a great result is never a mistake." If the enemy is not in occupation of the defile the sooner the farthest exit is secured the better, and any intention of the enemy to prevent the passage of the defile is thus frustrated. If the enemy has made arrangements to dispute or obstruct the passage he may

(1) Occupy the entrance in order to dispute the passage.

(2) Take up a position at the farthest exit to attack the column as it debouches.

(3) Allow the column to enter the defile and then attack the flanks.

(4) Conceal himself at some distance from the flanks and then attack the rear guard.

If he disputes the entrance, a strong advance

guard, supplemented by strong flank guards, is essential, for the former will be in a position to assist the advance of the latter by cross fire directed on the heights, artillery fire being especially valuable for this purpose.

If the enemy contents himself with simply holding a position at the furthest exit, the sooner the advanced guard reaches that exit the greater the chance of forestalling the enemy in his arrangements for opposing the passage. Should the enemy allow the column to enter the defile and then attack the flank guards, the advanced guard will be in a position to assist the flank guards by taking the enemy in reverse. The fourth case given above is of course a matter for the rear and flank guards alone, the advanced guard usually proceeding to secure the furthest exit, and there acting as circumstances may require.

However desirable it may be to seize the furthest exit, the main body must not thereby be wholly uncovered. The dash for the exit may be entrusted to the vanguard, the main-guard remaining to protect the main body, or the whole of the advanced guard may move forward, a supplementary one being sent out from the main body. The attempt to secure the exit is decidedly risky, for the enemy may decide yet on a fifth course of action. He may allow the

advanced guard to pass by and then interpose between it and the main body. Provision must be made for this contingency by ensuring communication with the main body and by preserving the formation of an advanced party, a support, and a main guard. More than ever, too, must attention be paid to the continued observation of side roads, glens, and ravines, which an enemy may use to interpose between successive bodies. If attacked and unable to advance, the advanced guard must hold its position till the main body comes up. If surrounded it must try and cut its way back.

When the flank guard is able to move along the heights, parallel to the main body, it will very materially assist the advanced guard to occupy the furthest exit and its own course of action will be simple. When, however, stationary patrols, or rather piquets are detailed, their withdrawal will be a matter which will call for considerable care; this too is one reason why they should not be detailed from the advanced guard, as the latter cannot make suitable arrangements for this purpose. Piquets would not usually be backed up by a support and main guard unless the crest line of the heights they occupy was some considerable distance from the main road, and unless it was possible for these bodies to move readily to their assistance.



Small supports should, however, invariably be posted at places where side roads, glens and ravines enter the main valley, where they perform the double duty of supporting the piquets and keeping them in observation, and of protecting the main body and baggage from attacks from these approaches.

All piquets should be numbered from the rear as they are posted, and, when there are several, they should be formed into separate sections. The commander of each section, having posted his piquets, moves back to a position below No. 1 piquet, ready to arrange for its withdrawal as soon as the rear guard closes up. The led horses of each piquet should remain below its position and the horseholders keep it in observation. Signalling communication, or pre-arranged signals for withdrawal, must be arranged between the section commander and his piquets. A piquet may withdraw downhill or join the piquet posted behind it; the latter course has the advantage of maintaining the strength of the flank guard as it withdraws. A piquet withdraws from its position at top speed and, when pressed by the enemy, the slowest runners should be sent off first, the best ones remaining to maintain a fire and so give but little indication of the withdrawal. The men sent off first should be careful to note



the best way to retire, and in fact act as ground scouts. It should be remembered that the shortest road on hillsides is not always the best, for a precipice may suddenly cut off the retreat. The withdrawal must be timely. In Tirah, in 1897, there were three notable instances of disaster occurring owing to untimely withdrawal. A piquet was cut up at the Waran Pass, because it retired too late. At Shinkamr a piquet retired too early, and left a party in rear which was cut up. A piquet in the Khurmana valley was completely forgotten and annihilated. The withdrawal of piquets is not an easy matter, and it is imperative that there be a commander to each group to superintend the withdrawal.

The withdrawal of piquets must be supported by fire from the piquets in rear, and from the rear guard. The point to be aimed at is to keep the enemy from pressing the retirement, and as soon as a piquet retires, fire should be poured on the spot vacated to prevent its occupation; the forward rush of the enemy is thus checked. A mountain battery, in Tirah, gave a good exhibition of how artillery should cover the retirement of piquets. It came along between the main body and main guard of the rear guard and then got into action. Ranges were at once taken to each piquet, and its

position identified. With telescope fixed to his eye, the commander watched for the moment a piquet retired, and that moment a shell burst over the spot, warning the enemy they had better lie low and not seek to gain the vantage point vacated.

It is unnecessary to dwell on the action of the rear guard, as this has already been considered, but another example from Tirah may be interesting to show the value of fire directed, not on the enemy themselves, but on vacated positions, with the sole object of preventing occupation. On 14th December, 1897, when one march still remained to clear the Bara Valley, the whole force became benighted and it was impossible to throw out piquets for protection. General Westmacott commanded the rear brigade, which, unable to reach camp, lay under arms all night. At early dawn next morning the brigade was disposed in two successive lines on successive ridges, and this position was maintained until noon to give the main body time to retire, for it had become mixed up, owing to late arrival in a camp intersected with ravines and covered with scrub jungle. The enemy were absolutely silent; all knew that such silence did not mean they did not exist, and that directly the retirement commenced their presence would be disclosed. On the

order to retire the rearmost line rose as one man and raced down the near side of the ridge. At once the lurking enemy rose in pursuit, but suddenly from the far ridge came a storm of lead directed simply on the crest of the vacated ridge and as suddenly the pursuit ceased. One point still remains to be considered and that is how far, in the case of a passage through a defile, the entrance should be held. When the defile is to be retraversed, then both the entrance and exits should be held. When this is not the case it will often be advisable to maintain a hold on the entrance until the exit has been also occupied, as should the force have to retire, it may find its retreat cut off.

## APPENDIX.\*

### RECONNAISSANCE SCHEME FOR A PATROL.

#### GENERAL IDEA.

A Red Infantry Brigade, with one squadron of divisional cavalry, operating in its own country, is defending Sialkote against a Blue Cavalry Division, which is raiding the country and cutting off supplies.

#### SPECIAL IDEA.

On 26th February, at 7 a.m., the G.O.C. Red Brigade receives an intercepted despatch, from which he learns that a Blue Force is to cross the Chenab, at Kulowal, on that date, and on the 27th join hands with the Blue Cavalry Division, with the object of assaulting Sialkote,

At 8 a.m. the G.O.C. despatches a patrol with the following orders :—

1. Information is specially required as to the strength, composition and intentions of the force said to be advancing *via* Kulowal.
2. You are to proceed to Kulowal and thence as circumstances may direct.
3. You are to return when your mission is completed. If necessary you will be relieved.
4. You are to make your own arrangements for the transmission of your messages, which should be addressed to G.O.C., Red Brigade, Sialkote.

\* See Preface.

5. You are already aware that the Blue cavalry are located at Zahura, and the D.A.A.G. will give you a copy of the intelligence report of this division. Nothing is known as to the hostile force said to be marching *via* Kulowal, though a large body of the enemy of all arms was reported to be at Rawal Pindi on the 2nd inst.

6. The Red Brigade remains at Sialkote.

NOTE.—You will obtain information, supposed to be procured by you, from flagmen posted at certain points. The notes you receive, containing this information, will direct your course from time to time.

## ORDER OF BATTLE OF BLUE CAVALRY DIVISION.

The division consists of 3 brigades and 2 batteries.

R.H.A.

G.O.C. of Division	...	...	Major General Hill.
Chief of Staff	...	...	Colonel Stone.
D.A.A.G.	...	...	Major Smythe.

### 1ST BRIGADE.

G.O.C.	...	...	Brig. General King.
Bde. Major	...	...	Major Knowles.
4th Lancers	...	...	Colonel Wyndham.
6th Lancers	...	...	Colonel Browne.
8th Lancers	...	...	Colonel Rice.

### 2ND BRIGADE.

G.O.C.	...	...	Brig. General Haye.
Bde. Major	...	...	Capt. Sinclair.
3rd Hussars	...	...	Major Knight.
6th Dragoons	...	...	Colonel Percy.
8th Carabineers	...	...	Colonel Hall.

## 3RD BRIGADE.

G.O.C.	..	...	...	Brig. General Kirby.
Bde. Major	...	...	...	Capt. Finnis.
16th Lancers	...	...	...	Colonel Dove.
17th Lancers	...	...	...	Colonel Harris.
6th Hussars	...	...	...	Colonel Low.

## 6TH BRIGADE, R.H.A.

C.R.A.	...	...	...	Colonel Hare.
Bde. Major	...	...	...	Capt. Mahon.
"O" Battery	...	...	...	Major Sims.
"T" Battery	...	...	...	Major Porter.

NOTES.—The 6th Dragoons can only turn out two weak squadrons. The 8th Lancer horses are in such poor condition that they have not been sent on the late raids. The 8th Carabineers have been lately remounted on an indifferent stamp of horse, and these are quite untrained. All horses are branded on the near shoulder, thus 17 L., *e.g.*, 17th Lancers, except those of the 8th Carabineers.

## DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNT OF UNIFORMS.

The uniforms, arms, equipment, etc. of all regiments are of similar pattern. Rifles are carried in slings, the butt resting in a small bucket on the near side. Horses are Australians. Exceptions are:—

## 3RD HUSSARS.

*Horses*.—Officers and men mounted on Arabs.

*Helmets*.—Low wide pith for officers and men.

*Megaphones*.—All officers carry these.

*Chevrons*.—Yellow on light blue ground.

## 4TH LANCERS.

*Helmets*.—Same as for 3rd Hussars, for officers only.

*Boots*.—Elcho for officers.

*Chevrons*.—Red on black ground.

*Pennons*.—Red and black.



## 6TH DRAGOONS.

*Horses*.—Country bred, with several greys.

*Gaiters*.—Officers and men black leather.

*Chevrons*.—Red on black ground.

## 6TH HUSSARS.

*Horses*.—Officers on Australians, men on Arabs.

*Chevrons*.—Yellow on red ground.

## 6TH LANCERS.

*Helmets*.—Regulation, with red tuft of feathers on right side.

*Chevrons*.—White on black ground.

*Pennons*.—Black and white.

## 8TH LANCERS.

*Chevrons*.—Green on black ground.

*Pennons*.—Green and black.

## 8TH CARABINEERS.

*Whistles*.—Carried by officers and N.C.O.'s, strapped round the right wrist.

*Chevrons*.—Light blue on dark blue ground.

## 16TH LANCERS.

*Lances*.—Officers also carry these.

*Chevrons*.—Black on red ground.

*Pennons*.—Black and red, but unusually long and not carried on service.

## 17TH LANCERS.

*Boots*.—Elcho pattern for officers, men red leather gaiters.

*Rifles*.—Carried in a bucket on offside.

*Chevrons*.—Red on yellow ground.

*Pennons*.—Red and yellow.

**INFORMATION TO BE SUPPLIED BY  
FLAGMEN.**

1. Patrol arrives at Kanbrawal Bridge and finds it held by the enemy, who open fire. By binoculars it is seen that the enemy has red chevrons on yellow ground. All attempts to cross the canal below this bridge fail and the patrol proceeds up the left bank, hoping to cross higher up.

2. On arriving at Dugri, the patrol meets Mir Alan, contractor of the Kulowal ferry. He is well known to the patrol and his information may be considered reliable. He states that at 6 a.m. this morning a squadron arrived at the ferry, six dismounted troopers got into each boat and took them upstream. He positively asserts that no new body of the enemy has crossed the ferry and none are to be seen on the right bank, no travellers crossed the ferry before the boats were taken away. Believing the capture of the boats to be important, he started on his pony to carry the news into Sialkote. On reaching Kanbrawal, he was captured, his pony taken from him and he detained for some time, but then allowed to go back to Kulowal. Evading the enemy, he managed to swim the canal at Dugri. He did not note the uniform of the enemy but there were about 100 troopers at Kanbrawal, and the officer he was taken before was very tall and burly, he thinks he was a colonel. A hostile patrol being seen on the far bank of the canal, the patrol proceeds up the left bank.

3. Reaching Barlowali bridge, the patrol finds it held and proceeds up the left bank of the canal.

4. Approaching the bridge north of Barlowali, the patrol finds it occupied, but sees a couple of troopers, with red and yellow pennons, riding off due east towards Zahura. A couple of men are sent in pursuit but fail to

catch them, as in the distance a patrol without pennons is seen.

5. Reaching the bridge at Pir Saba, the patrol finds the bridge held and notices two horses being watered in the canal on both of which there are rifle buckets on the off-side. A little further on some forty or fifty men are seen dismounted on the mound and behind them horses with similar rifle buckets. The patrol moves on up the left bank of the canal.

6. Near Marala the patrol meets a villager, who says he lives at Tornwal but left the village early this morning with the intention of crossing by the Marala ferry. Reaching Marala ferry, he was turned back by some men holding the embankment, he had time, however, to see an immense number of men mounted and dismounted, perhaps three or four thousand with a number of carts, mules, etc. These were all round the ferry. He did not recognise any uniforms. The patrol moves on up the left bank of the canal.

7. Nearing the Marala embankment, the patrol meets two hostile scouts with black and red pennons, they retire to the embankment from which fire is opened on the patrol. The patrol moves eastwards about one thousand yards from the embankment.

8. About one-and-a-half miles further the patrol sees a hostile patrol near the embankment, the patrol has red and black pennons. The patrol proceeds eastward.

9. A short distance beyond the patrol manages to look over the embankment and can clearly see a very large number of men with several carts collected near the ferry, but there do not appear to be more than a couple of squadrons and no formed body of dismounted men, such dismounted men as are to be seen appear to be transport drivers. A hostile patrol comes up and drives the patrol eastwards.

10. At Gondal the patrol captures a despatch rider, with accompanying message.—

To Col. Wyndham, 4th Lancers, Marala.

26—2—1910, No. 1. It is most important that the guns cross first.

From Col. Stone, C.S.O., Blue Division, Zahura.

The despatch rider, who belongs to the 6th Dragoons, states that Blue reinforcements are certainly expected from Rawalpindi, that so far as he knows the whole of the Blue cavalry division is still at Zahura, and he only knows that he has to take the despatch to Colonel Wyndham at Malara. He states also that he knew his own regiment had been ordered yesterday to pack up its heavy baggage, which was to be loaded this morning, but he did not know if this had been done, the reason for loading up the baggage was that the regiment expected to be sent on a raid to destroy the line of railway, south of Sialkote.

The patrol unable to obtain further information, decides to move towards Zahura.

11. On reaching Zahura, the patrol sees the Blue Division in its old lines. Tents are standing and horses ready saddled at their piquets, but otherwise there does not seem to be much baggage about, while here and there are some large fires as of stores burning. A hostile troop comes up and drives the patrol off. It retires to Marakiwal and learns from the villagers that they have, for the last few days, been impressed to burn and bury a number of horses. The patrol inspect one not yet burnt and finds there are several abscesses in the nostrils, while the glands of the jaws are swollen and hard. The patrol commander now sends in his final report and remains in observation of the Blue division.



162

884







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